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THE ANNOUNCEMENT that President-elect Roosevelt has indorsed the action of the Department of State reaffirming the Stimson doctrine is strategically timed. It comes at a moment when Japan is engaged in a new aggressive campaign in China and just prior to the meeting at Geneva of the Committee of Nineteen. That Mr. Roosevelt, by this act of collaboration, has deviated sharply from his hands-off policy in national affairs gives the announcement added weight. We have no doubts regarding the moral value of this move. The rightness of America's position in refusing to lend its assent to the violation of existing treaties to which it is a party is undeniable. The whole structure of international cooperation has been undermined by the reckless conduct of the militarists who at this hour control Japan's destinies. The immediate results of the recent announcement, however, will probably be no more striking than those which followed Stimson's original statement. The Japanese will be annoyed and perhaps disturbed; but will their armies withdraw from Jehol and Manchuria? The whole situation would be greatly clarified if the United States, in addition to reaffirming its position, would call a conference of the signers of the Pact of Paris to consider an international embargo on arms, ammunition, and credits for any nation violating that treaty.

SENATOR HUEY LONG'S FILIBUSTER has about put the finishing touch to the present hopeless session of the dying Congress. We do not regret that he has compelled an extra session—that in any event should be called to meet at the earliest possible moment. We only regret that this pestiferous Senator, by paralyzing the Senate's conduct of its business, has injured the prestige of that body before the country, which all too often fails to understand that, despite the occasional abuse of unlimited debate, that privilege is what makes the Senate so extraordinarily valuable. But the general chaos in Washington gets worse. Congress drifts; the President is ignored by it or violently opposed. He himself, incredible as it seems, is merely making a record on which to base his preposterous campaign for renomination in 1936, which he still believes possible because of his continuing control of the Republican National Committee. The foreign diplomats in Washington are at a loss to know to whom to turn for a hearing in the innumerable pending issues of moment. The Democrats continue to urge the President-elect to keep his hands off entirely, especially since his fingers were badly burned in his one experiment in the matter of the proposed increase in income taxes. Meanwhile, the flood of dangerous proposals for curing our evils—all of them calling for inflation or for fresh raids upon the Treasury—mounts steadily. We shall be lucky, indeed, if we do not bleed to death because of the extension to the farmers and to business men generally of the protectionist philosophy that the government must guarantee the profits of the manufacturers. All of which ought to be a clarion call to Mr. Roosevelt to be ready for prompt and aggressive action both in national and in international affairs the minute he takes office.

TO THE INNOCENT OBSERVER it might have seemed impossible to make the so-called farm-parity bill less defensible than it was, but the House, before passing it by a vote of 203 to 151, succeeded in reducing it to an even greater travesty. As originally proposed, the plan would have attempted to fix the price of four relatively "basic" commodities—wheat, cotton, hogs, and tobacco. The theory was that if the consumer were forced to pay a tax of 100 or 200 per cent on these products, they would be consumed in smaller quantities, and consumers would substitute other products. The substitution of these other products, it was argued, would create an increased demand for them and so raise their price; and hence all farm products would tend to be helped by raising the prices of these four. It will immediately be seen that this argument was a double-edged one, for if raising the price of the four selected commodities really did reduce the demand for them enough to lead to substantial substitutions, then the parity plan would help the producers of the selected four commodities far less than its proponents claimed; it might even seriously injure them. The House, by throwing into the list of selected commodities rice, butter fat, and peanuts at the last moment, makes any serious defense of the bill impossible. No answer, on any ground of principle, can now be given to other agricultural producers who want special

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bonuses paid for lima beans, artichokes, asparagus, cantaloupes, tomatoes, carrots, onions, potatoes, apples, pears, cherries, strawberries, sheep, guinea-pigs, chickens, turkeys, and ducks. From the collapse of the Farm Board experiment, not to speak of the Brazilian coffee-valorization plan, the Australian wool plan, the Japanese silk plan, the Stevenson rubber plan, we have learned absolutely nothing. We continue the attempt to subsidize our way out of the depression.

LITTLE IS TO BE EXPECTED of the present lame-duck session of Congress, but at least it is to be hoped that it will act upon President Hoover's special message calling for an immediate revision of the national bankruptcy laws. Even if general conditions should take an immediate turn for the better, we are certain to witness bankruptcies on an almost unparalleled scale: in one way or another, our debt structure must be scaled down. Hitherto the way of scaling it down has been through individual receiverships lasting from two to six years, in which every effort at adjustment could be blocked by a small minority of creditors seeking special privileges for themselves and often able to postpone adjustment until they were satisfied. There have been endless "protective committees" whereby each class of debtor sought mainly to protect itself from other classes of debtors; and the net result has been that lawyers have benefited more largely from receiverships than the creditors themselves. President Hoover has proposed that the bankruptcy laws be now amended so that voluntary adjustments may be reached between individuals, corporations, and creditors whenever majority agreement among creditors may be obtained, and that whenever two-thirds of the creditors in each class approve of a settlement, the remaining creditors shall be obliged to accept it. Some such first step as this in the revision of our antiquated bankruptcy laws is urgently necessary.

THE $50,000,000 Kreuger and Toll loan of 5 per cent secured sinking-fund gold debentures was "secured," according to the bond-house circulars, by a variety of collateral including "bonds or notes issued or guaranteed by any sovereign state or political subdivision thereof." "Securities to be pledged initially" were to "have a total par value . . . equivalent to 120 per cent of the par value of such portion of the loans as was issued [$23,700,000]" as well as " annual income at rates of interest and guaranteed dividends . . . equivalent to not less than 120 per cent of the annual interest requirements." By an agreement between Ivar Kreuger and the American bankers' syndicate, substitution of collateral was to be permitted—a circumstance thus vaguely stated in the syndicate's prospectuses: "In view of the nature of the business of the company, the debenture agreement will contain certain broad provisions in regard to withdrawal and substitution of pledged securities." Testimony before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee has disclosed that for the unexceptionable French bonds "pledged initially" Ivar Kreuger substituted bonds of Jugoslavia and other principalities now in default or of dubious value. That the responsibility for safeguarding the investors in such an exchange rested squarely upon the banking sponsors of the loan would seem undeniable unless American high finance frankly reverts to the discredited doctrine of *caveat emptor*.

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC has been taught to have confidence in great names, of individuals and firms. Neither the shrewd business man nor the traditional "widows and orphans" can fathom the facts beneath the smooth phraseology of a bond or stock offering. Nor have they been expected to. The one bit of discrimination required of a prospective investor under the prevailing code was that he should be able to distinguish between the fly-by-night concern and one of established repute. It was to this end that newspapers censored their advertising columns, that better business bureaus were established, that blue-sky laws were enacted. In floating the Kreuger and Toll bonds all the hall-marks of respectability were present. The underwriting syndicate consisted of Lee, Higginson and Company, the Guaranty Company of New York, Brown B[illegible]d Company, the National City Company, Dillon, [illegible] Company, the Union Trust Company of Pittsburgh, Clark, Dodge and Company. Legal matters were to be "passed upon" by Messrs. Ropes, Gray, Boyden, and Perkins of Boston, and Messrs. Carter, Ledyard, and Milburn of New York. It was confidence in these illustrious names that extracted the dollars of the American public. Just how, in the ultimate results, it fared materially better than it would have with a Ponzi, a J. Rufus Wallingford, or similar promoters is yet to be shown. Difference in intent may be cited in defense of these leaders of American finance. But the law has often established bounds beyond which negligence becomes criminal. It has done so in England, where, as Dr. Max Winkler suggested to the Senate committee, the issuance of misleading prospectuses or other financial statements is a criminal as well as a civil offense.

IN HIS DOUBLE ROLE of public mentor and president of Columbia University, Nicholas Murray Butler has appointed seventeen distinguished persons in and out of academic life to undertake at once an investigation of the economic crisis with particular reference to methods of production and international exchange. It is not to be merely a fact-finding commission, but is to make recommendations for "corrective action." Seven members of the commission are professors at Columbia, four are from other universities, and the rest are students of economics and public affairs. The group will consider especially the whole question of technological advance, and the study may thereby shed some light upon the new "science" of technocracy. This is an excellent enterprise, and the high quality of the members of the commission, comprising as it does such men as John M. Clark, James W. Angell, A. A. Berle, Jr., Wesley C. Mitchell, James H. Rogers, Benjamin M. Anderson, Alvin Johnson, Walter Lippmann, George Soule, and Harlow S. Person, insures a report which may easily prove as valuable as the recent study of social trends.

LOUIS FISCHER wrote in *The Nation* of January 11 that unless the Russian peasant "receives a very firm assurance that he will not have to submit to procurements again next autumn and winter, he will not plant this coming spring, and the Soviet Union will have another bad harvest. On this point the Kremlin must speak quickly—in January preferably, in March at the latest. March is the final term in Russia for effective agrarian reforms." The Kremlin chose the second week in January as the time for announcing

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that it had yielded to the increasingly hostile pressure of the peasants. It is interesting, however, that the announcement came not from Stalin, the dictator, but from Molotov, president of the Council of People's Commissars. While Stalin had spoken out a few days earlier, his speech does not appear to have been designed to reassure the peasant. He declared that the collectivization of agriculture must go on unceasingly—"while small peasant individualism remained," there would always be "danger of a capitalist restoration"—and he asserted in quite unmistakable language that there could be no compromise with capitalism. He added that although "we did not succeed in satisfying all the needs of workers and peasants, and it is improbable that this can be done in the next few years," nevertheless, a solid foundation for industrial and rural socialism had already been laid. And with considerable meaning he said: "Our own camp is being increased throughout the world by the successes of the Five-Year Plan."

AS HEAD of the Russian state Stalin probably considered it imperative that he take this firm position. He may have felt that any show of weakness would be interpreted at home as betraying a lack of confidence in his own policies and abroad as indicating a departure from the program of socialization. In any event it was left to Molotov to make the necessary concessions to the peasants. The reforms proposed follow very closely the changes Mr. Fischer said must be adopted to avoid further trouble. Grain procurements are to be abolished. A grain income tax similar to that which Lenin instituted in 1921 will take the place of the procurement system. This should have the effect which Lenin foresaw: "The exact amount of the tax is known in advance, that is, as early as spring, to every single peasant. This will mean less abuse in the collection of the tax. This will mean that every peasant will be more interested in increasing his acreage, in improving his household, and in striving to increase his harvests." Of course, the peasant will have to have access to the free market in order to dispose of his surplus produce and so derive an advantage from the reform. That may seem like a return to private capitalism, but at the same time Stalin has warned that there will be no let-up in collectivization, which means that this compromise with private capitalism will probably be temporary.

IT IS NOW APPARENT that the League of Nations does not even intend to propose a meaningless compromise solution of the Manchurian question for the sake of saving its own face, but will elect rather to drop the matter quietly, leaving Japan undisturbed in its ill-gotten gains. For this outcome, which must eventually prove disastrous to the League, the smaller Powers have France and England to thank. The policies laid down at Geneva have always been dictated by Paris and London. In the Manchurian crisis these two Powers were especially anxious that nothing should be done to offend the Japanese. There has long been a tacit understanding between Paris and Tokio with regard to Far Eastern affairs. Neither has been particularly enthusiastic about the Open Door policy, not only because of its American origin and support, but because it has hindered the imperialistic expansion of both countries on the Asiatic mainland. Moreover, there is plenty of evidence pointing to financial, if not political, cooperation between France and Japan in the handling of the Manchurian question. For one thing, the Japanese have needed extensive credits with which to buy munitions for use in Manchuria. The bulk of the imported munitions has come from French factories or from the French-controlled Skoda Works in Czecho-Slovakia. It is more than reasonable to suppose that the necessary credits have been extended by French bankers and munitions makers.

ENGLAND, TOO, has wanted to remain on good terms with Japan. In a recent issue of *Current History* the intimate relationship between the foreign offices in London and Tokio was described in the frankest terms by Commander J. M. Kenworthy, a member of Parliament and former Cabinet minister. Commander Kenworthy declared that the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which was formally renounced at the Washington Conference, is actually still in force. The British continue to use Japan for their own purposes in the Far East. They have not changed their policy in this respect since 1895, when, as a result of the Sino-Japanese war, they decided they must use Japan rather than China to keep the Russian bear in check. So far as international communications are concerned, Japan occupies a strategic location, and England is naturally unwilling to make an enemy of a country which is in a position to cut its inter-imperial communications in time of war. In this connection Japan's mandate over the island of Yap has special significance. Yap is a cable center and as such is important to all countries interested in the Far East. So long as Japan holds this island by mandate, the British can retain a definite measure of influence over its administration. But if Japan quits the League, as it has several times threatened to do, the Japanese will unquestionably make short shrift of the mandate and simply annex the island. These and several kindred factors explain the French and English attitude toward the Manchurian question. They do not justify it.

THE LATE CHARLES W. MORSE was another one of the captains of industry who found his way behind the bars. His friends were always certain that it was really a bit of bad luck, since, they maintained, he was convicted on a technicality, whereas plenty of others much guiltier went unwhipped of justice. He was not only the ice king of America but was also on the way to becoming the steamboat king as well, and heaven alone knows where he would have stopped had he not been caught up with. But the Morse case will be longest remembered because of his devoted and beautiful wife who left nothing undone to rescue him, and—by means of certain pieces of soap—succeeded in getting her husband released. She herself carried his case to the White House; the pieces of soap when eaten produced in Morse a condition which fooled a board of three army surgeons into informing President Taft that Morse had only a short time to live. He was pardoned by Mr. Taft—not, as the doctors expected, to die at once, but to live on for twenty years, surviving both his faithful wife and Mr. Taft. A second time he went on trial, with his sons, in 1922, only to be acquitted. Surely there is plenty of material for romance in this story, and not only in the feminine element. If anybody doubts that Morse's role called for amazing determination and fortitude let him try a diet of soap.

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An Open Letter to Technocracy

MR. HOWARD SCOTT, Director
CONTINENTAL COMMITTEE ON TECHNOCRACY
1 EAST FORTY-SECOND STREET
NEW YORK CITY

DEAR MR. SCOTT: Technocracy has performed a genuine service by focusing public interest on the two central problems of capitalist society—machines and money. Unless the present system can give the people jobs and the means to buy the essentials of life it is headed for drastic change. Your survey, more than any other economic research in recent American history, has captured the attention of the country. It has dramatized the problems involved in the displacement of men by machines and the inadequacy of the present system of currency and credit for balancing production and distribution. *The Nation* has so far refrained from editorial comment on the findings of Technocracy. We should have preferred to wait until the publication of your research reports and of your more considered conclusions. Unfortunately, however, the beans have been spilled before they were fully cooked; while your research is only partially complete, you have allowed certain limited data to be published. On this material, which is obviously ex parte, you and certain sympathetic commentators have based sensational statements; other less friendly critics have drawn from the same fragmentary data very different conclusions. Your release of this material and the public interest it has aroused lay upon you a vital obligation to make all your findings available for consideration and appraisal.

The Nation, in common with all thoughtful people, wishes to know the answers to two questions: First, are your facts essentially accurate? Second, what bearing do they have on current problems of economic policy?

There is urgent need of an appraisal of Technocracy based on an impartial examination of its figures and their implications. Such a survey should be conducted by a group of persons who command the respect of the community for their integrity, their independence, and their ability. It should include persons professionally qualified to pass upon the facts, who through wide political and social experience are also capable of making an informed judgment on questions of practical policy.

The Nation has asked such a group whether they would be willing to conduct an audit of Technocracy, provided they were allowed access to its records. It is striking evidence of the public importance of the problems with which Technocracy is concerned that the following persons have accepted *The Nation's* invitation:

M. C. RORTY, engineer and statistician.
Formerly vice-president, International Telephone and Telegraph Company; chief statistician, American Telephone and Telegraph Company; president, International Telephone Securities Company; and president, American Statistical Association.

DEXTER S. KIMBALL, engineer and university professor.
Dean of the College of Engineering of Cornell University; formerly designing engineer, Anaconda Copper Company; president, American Engineering Council.

LEONARD S. HORNER, electrical engineer.
Chairman of the Committee of Census of Manufacturers of the United States Department of Commerce; formerly president of the Niles-Bement-Pond Company.

ALVIN S. JOHNSON, economist.
Director, New School for Social Research; assistant editor, Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences; member, editorial board, the *New Republic.*

LEO WOLMAN, economist.
Professor of economics, Columbia University; research director, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; chairman, Interstate Commission on Unemployment Insurance.

HARRY W. LAIDLER, economist.
Executive director, League for Industrial Democracy; chairman of the board, National Bureau of Economic Research; author of "Concentration of Control in American Industry," etc.

ERNEST GRUENING, editor.
Member, editorial board, *The Nation;* recently editor, Portland (Maine) *Evening News;* author of "The Public Pays," etc.

EVANS CLARK, foundation official.
Executive director, the Twentieth Century Fund, Inc.; formerly special industrial writer, the New York *Times,* and director, the Labor Bureau, Inc.; author of "Financing the Consumer," etc.

In asking this group to serve we have made but two suggestions. We have urged them first to give their attention to the immediate fully as much as to the ultimate implications of your findings. *The Nation* believes that the spokesmen of Technocracy have shown too great a readiness to deal with the final destinies of "capitalism" and "the price system." Such wide generalizations obscure precise thinking and raise barbed-wire entanglements in the way of a unified advance upon our common problems. It will of course be necessary to pass judgment on the implications of Technocracy's theories, but that should be merely the starting-point for the formulation of specific recommendations for action by public and private agencies which will apply whatever may be sound in your findings to the problems of here and now in the interest of lasting economic recovery and the equitable distribution of wealth among all sections of the population.

Our second suggestion concerns a question which has been too generally ignored in current discussions of Technocracy. The very name of your group implies government by technicians. It has been widely rumored that Technocracy is in part an organization designed to assume power in the event of an economic collapse. It would be valuable if the auditing committee might also be allowed to explore this aspect of your program.

We sincerely hope that Technocracy, in its own interest as well as that of the general public, will accept our suggestion of an audit and appraisal of its findings by an impartial committee of experts. We should like to have your reply for publication in our next issue.

THE EDITORS OF THE NATION

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Suicide Is Confession

"WE have sinned—and the wages of sin is death!" Thus, in effect, do the officials of the National Electric Light Association solemnly confess and announce its formal execution. That great trade organization of the light and power industry, devoted for years to the dissemination of its own variety of light and to the perpetuation of its vast power, is to be extinguished. From its ashes a brand-new trade association, purged and purified, the Edison Electric Institute, is to spring. This organization, its sponsors announce, "is looked upon as providing a definite answer to demands made by public-utility leaders" at the convention last June "that the industry divest itself of all semblance of propaganda activities and that it assume an attitude of frankness and ready cooperation in its dealings with the public and regulatory bodies, that complete financial reports be made by all companies . . ."

It certainly comes under the head of "good news, if true" that the light and power industry is to stop disseminating its propaganda at the public's expense; that it will no longer attempt to prostitute the press and pollute the wells of learning in kindergarten, school, and college; that it will not again secretly subsidize "experts" to make "impartial" reports detrimental to public operation in Ontario and in our municipal-ownership cities and power districts; that it will no longer broadcast these falsehoods; that it will cease pinning the Bolshevik tag on those few courageous and faithful public servants and publicists who for years have sought to make the light and power industry conform to its own professions; that it will substitute frankness for dishonesty and deceit in its public relations.

While welcoming any move by the privately owned utilities to cleanse themselves from within, the public may well maintain a certain prudent reserve in its approval. The new enlightenment appears a bit like flight from the wrath to come. The nation will wait to see whether the fruits brought forth shall be meet for repentance, whether, indeed, to paraphrase Scripture still further, the pyramids shall be brought low and the crooked made straight.

For obviously the penitence comes late. The uncovering by the Federal Trade Commission of the most gigantic deception practiced on the American people in peace time came in 1928. At their various conventions in 1929, 1930, and 1931 National Electric Light Association officials, the executives and spokesmen of the industry, vied with each other in proclaiming the righteousness of their existing policies and practices. The perfection of existing control and management was perfervidly proclaimed. But then Hoover was in the White House, Insull was in Chicago, and all was well with the world. Now within a few weeks will be ushered in the Presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, with his most positive and unequivocal campaign pronouncements on power reform, and his evident guidance on that issue by those aware of the need of control in the public interest of that fundamentally important energy—electric power.

Moreover, the lone voices which foretold the weakness of the utility holding-company pyramids, which decried their iniquity as "masterpieces of designed confusion"—designed to mulct both consumer and investor—these voices now have the ring of authority. The Insull empire is in ruins about the heads of hundreds of thousands of innocent investors, the very "widows and orphans" in whose behalf, allegedly, the power interests have so doggedly fought and resisted all effective regulation. And so, although practices wholly analogous to those of Insull exist throughout the dozen surviving great holding-company systems which control 80 per cent of the nation's power resources, it is not surprising that their overlords desire to disassociate themselves from the taint of that neo-Athenian. But how fundamental will be the reform which is implied in the reorganization of the N. E. L. A.?

Examination of the executives furnishes ground for some skepticism on that score. The officials of the new Institute are the same as those of the old Association. The president of the Edison Electric Institute is George B. Cortelyou, president of the American Gas Association. Although no extinction and rebirth of *that* trade association has been announced, it was the Siamese twin of the N. E. L. A. in its now decried activities. Indeed, it was at the convention of the American Gas Association in Chicago in 1920 that the first meeting of the directors of State utility information bureaus—the propaganda units—was held. And five years later, at the Gas Association's annual convention, it was the vice-president of the United Gas Improvement Company, P. H. Gadsden, who declared that the "educational" movement had "assumed such proportions that it is almost monopolizing the program of the American Gas Association." The present president of the United Gas Improvement is one of the trustees of the new Edison Electric Institute.

Mr. Cortelyou likewise became chairman in 1927 of the newly formed Committee of National Utility Associations, a high-pressure committee to integrate the propaganda activities of the National Electric Light Association, the American Gas Association, and the American Electric Railway Association. Mr. Gadsden became vice-chairman. Controlling investments totaling at that time seventeen and a half billion dollars, the chairman announced a nation-wide campaign backed by these potent forces "to demonstrate that the entry of government, whether national, State, or local, into this field [public utilities] is constitutionally unsafe, politically unwise, economically unsound, and competitively unfair."

Another of the officials of the new reformed institute is C. E. Groesbeck, long one of the two dominating officials of the great Electric Bond and Share Company, and now its president. It was that mammoth superholding-company system which declined to furnish information to the Federal Trade Commission on the expenditures of money to influence public opinion on the matter of public or municipal ownership, and on the fees charged to its subsidiaries. These were produced only after a prolonged court fight in which every resource of legal ingenuity was utilized and vast sums were expended. Included in the information thus extracted and now a matter of record is the fact that Electric Bond and Share derived from its subsidiaries service-fee profits of 73 per cent. It was the Electric Bond and Share Company also which secretly issued to its officers stock at far below market prices, and later, when the unexpected decline in values had brought prices even below this level, permitted these insiders to get their money back out of the company's treasury.

Perhaps the imminence of a "new deal" in Washington may have brought about the determination of the electric

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light and power magnates to deal from the top of the deck henceforth. But it should not be forgotten that they have all sat in the same game and played it in the same way from the beginning, and that the performances of many years are to be weighed against the professions of a day, a day which bids fair to be one of reckoning.

Mutual Loot

THE "Kent plan" for reviving employment has been presented to the Senate Committee on Manufactures by Charles A. Miller, president of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. This plan is the brain-child of Fred I. Kent, a banker of New York City. It proposes in brief that industry, with a view to reemploying as many workers as practicable, shall resume operations "on a 1927 scale." The various industrial corporations would purchase enough raw materials and other necessary goods to enable them to increase their production to a point approximating their output in the year 1927. They would obtain the credit required for these purchases from their local banks, which in turn would be guaranteed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation "against loss for such proportion of the loan as was not covered by the sale of the increased production." This on the surface is a plausible scheme; it would probably revive employment to a certain extent, at least for a time. But the principle underlying the plan is vicious beyond words.

If the scheme has no merit at all, that is to say, if it should prove economically unprofitable, it would simply pile up still higher the huge losses we have already incurred as a result of the depression, and these losses would be thrown in their entirety upon the government and taxpayers. But even if the plan has real merit in the sense that the industrialists and bankers would stand to make a profit from the contemplated increase in production, why should the taxpayers be required to underwrite it? Why should not industry and the banks also be called upon to shoulder whatever losses may be involved? Until February, 1932, the entrepreneur invariably took this risk. In that month, however, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was set up, and through this agency the government began pouring funds into private institutions. It is true that the banks, railroads, insurance companies, and building and loan associations have been helped by the government on the ground that they are endowed with a special public interest. But this governmental aid represented, nevertheless, a definite "socialization of losses."

Now Mr. Miller proposes that we shall extend this principle to help purely private interests as well. He timidly suggested when he appeared before the Senate Committee that he might be denounced as a Socialist for advancing this proposal. The most complete answer we have seen to this ridiculous assertion, as well as to the Kent plan itself, has come, not from any radical source, but from the financial editor of the conservative New York *Evening Post*. Mr. Miller, the financial editor said, "need have no fears on this score. He proposes a plan of private ownership of business in which during periods of prosperity the stockholders take the profit, but during the periods of difficulty the government pays the losses. No mere Socialist would be guilty of making such an unjust proposal."

Poets and Playhouses

SOME years ago one of the comic journals published a picture of two noble Romans leaving the amphitheater. "These gladiatorial combats are very amusing," says one, "but they are going to ruin the legitimate stage." The theater's golden age, like other golden ages, has always been in the past and something has always been destroying the legitimate stage. Said Hamlet of a chief member of his audience, "He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps"; and a century later Pope wrote:

> What dear delight to Britons farce affords,
> Always the sport of crowds but now of lords

Nevertheless, new reasons are always interesting, and when the person who invents them happens to be so distinguished a worker as Arthur Hopkins he is worth listening to. According to him the real reason for our empty playhouses is neither the depression nor the overbuilding of theaters, but Henrik Ibsen. Writing on The Lost Theater in the *New Outlook*, he bewails the good old days of Booth and Irving, when the theater was a place of illusion, and lifts up his voice against those who have tried to make it a place of realism and controversy. Let us, he says, stop jeering at people who complain of the ugliness of the theater on the ground that there is enough ugliness in everyday life. They are right. Realists have had ample opportunity to justify their methods. Yet, despite their talents, none of the English or American playwrights of the last thirty years will survive, and that alone is enough to prove that they have been attempting the impossible. Let the dramatists tear up their notebooks and look into their own hearts. "When the theater touches everyday life let it bring some new illumination, some new understanding. Open all doors to the poets. The theater hungers for them."

Mr. Hopkins is half right. The business of all drama, and of all literature as well, is with "illumination" and "understanding." Whether it be frankly fantastic or ostensibly literal, it must be, in some fashion or other, "better than life," or we would not gladly exchange life for it. One of the major defects of the dramatists of the last thirty years undoubtedly is their helplessness in the face of the facts they have observed, their inability either to resolve the discords they have struck or to wring beauty out of the tragic predicaments they have invented. They state the problems but they do not give the answers, and the business of great art is always with answers, with some emotional adjustment to the situations presented.

But Mr. Hopkins is wrong in assuming that the situation is so easy to rectify. The theater is not suffering from the results of some perversity of its own. It is suffering, together with all modern literature and all modern life, from the fact that no satisfactory answer has yet been found to the situations which the restless inquisitiveness of the modern mind has uncovered. The old solutions will not do and new ones have not been invented. The success of Mr. O'Neill's more imaginative plays is proof enough that neither the producer nor the public will reject high and serious beauty when there is anyone to offer it; but it is very seldom offered. Open the door to the poets? Let them knock and it shall be opened unto them.

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Issues and Men

A Cabinet for Mr. Roosevelt

JUST now everyone is busily engaged in making a Cabinet for Mr. Roosevelt. It is a pleasant game, hurts no one, and probably disturbs the President-elect not at all. One hears many rumors of what our next President is going to do. Only one story, however, seems to me to bear the marks of authenticity. It is that he has said that he proposes to put no one into his Cabinet who has his political future behind him and that he is looking for new material. It is to be hoped that this is true, for it would not help him to appoint left-overs of the Wilson regime or men who have become stale in the public eye or are wedded to outworn traditions. If Mr. Roosevelt could bring into public life a new group of young and vigorous executives eager to make their reputations, eager to solve the unparalleled problems that will confront them, eager to demonstrate their own and their party's fitness to govern, that in itself would be a genuine public service.

Mr. Roosevelt's is an extraordinarily difficult task because the Democratic Party has been out of power so long that there have been few opportunities for new leaders to develop. There are no new outstanding figures in the House of Representatives, and hardly any who have made records as governors, with Albert Ritchie of Maryland the chief exception. Especially in the West has there been a dearth of outstanding Democratic leaders. Stop and think: Is there any Democrat between the Mississippi River and the Pacific coast who at once suggests himself as Cabinet material? There may be such; I cannot call them to mind—unless we think of sitting Senators or Senators-elect. Yet, since the rule that the Cabinet must represent the various sections of the country will doubtless still hold, we are bound to attach significance to the visit to the President-elect of ex-Governor Woodring of Kansas. Here in the East we forget this rule when it comes to Cabinet-making and so we invariably people the Cabinet with men whom we all know in the East. With the West seething with unrest and suffering as perhaps never before, the embattled farmers are certainly entitled to a spokesman in the Cabinet. Who shall it be?

Even before Mr. Roosevelt considers geographical questions he must settle in his mind what his own theory is of what a Cabinet should be. Does he wish department heads who are to be merely yes-men and have no policies or ideas of their own? Or is he looking for outstanding personalities, men of aggressive vigor and clear-cut opinions? Mr. Wilson could not tolerate men of this type around him. He clashed early with Secretary Garrison and he made it clear that he wanted opinions only when he requested them. Mr. Roosevelt's personality is so different from that of Mr. Wilson that there is no danger of his taking this attitude; if anything he will be swayed too much by the opinions of others. A President may well demand of his Secretaries that they shall conform to his policies or retire. It was one of the scandals of the Coolidge Administration—at least from the European point of view—that some of his Cabinet made speeches or wrote reports in which they favored policies directly contrary to those of the President; and there has often been a great lack of coordination between Mr. Hoover and his Secretary of the Navy—to cite only one case. Once a President has laid down his program he has the right to expect complete adherence to it. After that he would seem to be best served by surrounding himself with striking personalities and frank counselors.

Today there seems to be agreement that one appointment has been decided upon, that of James Farley, Mr. Roosevelt's campaign manager, as Postmaster-General and general distributor of the patronage in cooperation with Louis Howe, Mr. Roosevelt's Fidus Achates. Against this appointment objection ought to be made at once, not on personal grounds—I wish to leave the personality of Mr. Farley out of the matter because I have never met him and do not know how able he is—but on principle. It is time somebody made a protest on behalf of the Post Office Department and its hard-working and underpaid employees. Why should every President unload his political Man Friday on the long-suffering Post Office Department? In all the years in which I have been writing on politics, there has been only one first-class business man in charge of the Post Office Department and he was John Wanamaker, by appointment of Benjamin Harrison. Mr. Cortelyou since his retirement from the Cabinet has made the reputation of being the able head of a tremendously powerful public-service corporation, but when he was Postmaster-General he, too, was in charge of the President's political fences. Mr. Wilson put the unspeakable Burleson from Texas into the Post Office Department without, of course, realizing that a war was coming, and that this man who was so destitute of any real understanding of American traditions and principles would become the censor of the American press. He, too, was chosen because he had been for years in the House of Representatives and therefore knew the political game of which Mr. Wilson was so ignorant. Meanwhile, critics of government ownership and management are always talking about the inefficiency of the Post Office Department as proof that the government must not go into business.

For the rest it is to be hoped that Frances Perkins is to be either Secretary of Labor or of Commerce. She would distinguish any Cabinet and it would be a magnificent thing to recognize her sex by appointing so able, so socially minded, and so remarkably efficient a woman to the Cabinet. But the most important appointment will be, as always, that of Secretary of State, and here everybody is at sea. There still persist rumors that the appointee will be Norman Davis. I do not believe it, and I sincerely hope that it will be a man as eminently fitted by character, legal training, knowledge of the world, and general right-mindedness on the issues of the day as Frederic R. Coudert of New York.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Is Divorce Worth the Price?

By DORA RUSSELL

THE legal records for the past year in England show the highest number of divorce petitions ever filed in one year. At the same time it is asserted that the divorce rate in the United States is no higher, and indeed is possibly lower, than it used to be. Divorce, to which unhappily married English people and other Europeans are increasingly turning, is, so some say, increasingly being rejected by the Americans, who have had fuller and longer experience of its inadequacy as a solution for matrimonial difficulties. The economics and the psychology of marriage and divorce are certainly not identical in Europe and America, and it is interesting to speculate as to whether the attitude of men and women on either side of the Atlantic is changing, and if so, what may be the outcome.

Economic questions bulk largest at the present time in the minds of us all. Some people may not be securing divorces because, like the proletariat, they cannot afford to. In England, among the poor, the victim of a really unhappy marriage receives considerable tolerance from neighbors if he or she forms an extra-legal union. It is assumed that a divorce is not for the "likes of him" but only for the rich who can pay for the law and thread their way through its mazes. But a marriage makes everyone feel more comfortable, so that bigamy, though a crime, is in England quite a common one among the poor, and is winked at even by those responsible for legal morality unless it is forced upon the notice of the police; or unless it has flagrant features such as marrying one partner after another to extort money.

Only recently in England a man came before the court charged with the crime of bigamy; his legal wife went to plead for him so that he escaped penalty. The judge asked her if she still wanted her husband. She replied: "Do not put it like that. I wish to see him happy with the woman he loves." She added that she would now try to divorce him. This conduct earned her a compliment from the judge, who went so far as to add that the person who had informed the police of the bigamy was an interfering woman who would have done better to mind her own business. The generosity and moral values shown in these bigamy cases, both by judges and contending parties, are frequently far in advance of those that prevail or are even permitted in the divorce courts, where revenge rather than compassion is still in most cases the dominant motive not only of the petitioner but of the judge as well.

It seems to me quite possible that poverty is a deterrent factor influencing the divorce rate. Men and women may well decide that the expense of the law is one that may be spared and postpone a legal solution of their problems until better times, meanwhile living with new partners without legal sanction. Or it may be that economic reverses make men and women disinclined to be quitters. They prefer in bad times, perhaps, to patch up their quarrels and stand by their children jointly. One may safely say that in the United States during the last twenty years divorce has been entered upon for lighter cause than in Europe. There are several reasons for this: the most obvious is the easier divorce laws; then there is the consequent smaller social penalty; and lastly there is the fact that it has been easier for men and women to make a living in America, so that the legal expense or the cost of alimony or the necessity in which a divorced wife might find herself of earning her own and perhaps also her children's bread has not been a serious deterrent. In this time of economic panic people's first thought is how to keep themselves and their children alive. Sexual frustration or maladjustment, under such circumstances, is apt to go by the board.

But, it may be argued, how is it then that the divorce rate in England is still rising, since English people, like everyone else, must be feeling the pinch? In the first place, the English rentier class are still more secure than the same class in most other countries, or they believe themselves to be so, which is the more important from the point of view of psychology. In the second place, English divorce law and custom have lagged so far behind those of other countries—except those under Catholic dominance—that the English are only now beginning to make up for lost time. The recent changes of the law in England that make it possible to divorce a husband for adultery alone have caused a great increase in arranged divorces. There would probably have been a much more rapid increase in the divorce rate if we had now been richer.

What is more, the judges have been at pains to try to snatch away the greater latitude that the law has given by severely scrutinizing the "hotel-bill" divorce, demanding in such cases both the name of the woman corespondent and evidence that there has been not one act but continued adultery with her. Nor does the petitioner—the so-called innocent party—escape. He or she is closely cross-examined and must, if there has been a lapse into adultery on his or her part, confess it to the court and ask for its mercy and discretion. If such confession is not made, any person who has information as to the petitioner's private life may carry it to the King's Proctor, who then intervenes in the suit and prevents the divorce decree from being made absolute. The petitioner is then left bound for life, with the costs of the King's Proctor to pay in addition to those of the ordinary lawyers.

Emissaries of the King's Proctor make it their business—in the interests of what is called public morality—to spy upon and shadow people engaged in securing divorces. It is said that the King's Proctor's department intends from now on to investigate thoroughly every undefended divorce. Quite simply this means the harrying of all people who are trying to get decently out of an unhappy marriage. These discretion cases are at the present time the scandal of our divorce courts, not by reason of the immorality of the unfortunate people who have to face them, but because of the way in which they are used to provide interesting sexual histories for the judges and additional fees for the lawyers who thrive on divorce cases.

Not long ago a woman asked the discretion of the court in divorcing her husband, admitting adultery with one

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other man. The King's Proctor intervened because his department discovered that the woman had not disclosed the full nature of the adultery, which had not been limited to one or two casual incidents, but had been continued over a period of two years or so. The judge did not quash the divorce, but ordered the woman to pay the costs of the King's Proctor within six months. It is difficult to see how public morality was served in this case except in so far as more money went into the pockets of the state officials appointed to maintain it.

In the face of such humiliation and expense the English are none the less getting more divorces. This certainly implies a change in our attitude. The English are not only a sentimental but an incurably obstinate people. They have tried hard to cling to the romantic ideal that people marry once for all time. The Englishwoman is in far greater subjection to the family than might be supposed from the outward signs of feminism in English politics. English wives have been willing to allow a good deal of latitude to their husbands, provided open scandal was avoided, and of recent years husbands have often extended similar tolerance to their wives. Both have made real efforts to prevent the breaking up of family life even when sexual impulses led to temporary infidelities. Romantic friendships probably lead to sexual intercourse more frequently in England than in the United States just because a divorce is less likely to ensue. Roughly speaking, the English have thought it more indecent to break a marriage than to have affairs *sub rosa,* while Americans on the whole have thought that it was more indecent to be unfaithful without accepting the consequences of a fairly prompt divorce.

Lately the idea that it is right to set one's partner free when he or she really wishes it has gained ground in England. In order to give freedom to each other, men and women possessed of a higher standard of morality than is allowed for in our law have been increasingly willing to go through real hardships and disgrace to comply with the law's absurdities when cheating it by subterfuge no longer avails. At the same time, Americans seem perhaps to have been discovering that there may be greater disadvantages in insisting on the break-up of a pretty good home at the bidding of an uncertain romance than in mutual tolerance of infidelity.

If this is so, then the American and English views have come nearer together, and there may be ground for hope that a new family morality built upon practical experience rather than on taboos is being evolved. The complications of human personality and emotion both in children and in adults are more honestly faced and better understood in both countries than they used to be. In consequence, the bankruptcy of legal solutions and the legal mind is more fully revealed. The law may bind or set free, divide property and split up the lives of children between separated parents, but the emotional tangle remains and can never be resolved except in the hearts of the men and women and children caught in its meshes.

No man or woman is free of a marriage until love and hate have been softened into friendship or indifference; no child is free of his parents' concerns until he is old enough and strong enough to have made a real life of his own. For some adults a new love wipes out an old one; for others it brings added riches without destroying the value of old ties. Some parents can let parental affections be dimmed by new sexual love; for others the conflict between new love and old parental ties provides half a lifetime of sorrow. And there are few children who escape some psychological harm when parents who have been closely united quarrel and go apart. Though the modern child may be independent enough to spend only a little time with his parents, his instinct is still to take each by the hand and keep them united. The relation of his blood parents is his psychic home. He feels endangered by its disruption whether that disruption is the result of quarrels at home or of divorce.

But it must be stressed that this is a psychological matter —it is the image of the parents' relation in the child's mind that counts. Thus it is possible to imagine divorce conducted in such a manner as not to break or seriously disturb this image. Emotionally mature people should be able to distinguish between sexual and parental love. Divorced husbands and wives should be capable of maintaining friendship and co-operation over their children's welfare. Even when one partner is left alone, without remarriage, is it unthinkable that he or she should be generous enough to preserve at least some kind of mutual parenthood with the one who has broken up the home? Indeed, would not many husbands and wives naturally be ready to part without rancor, and equally naturally continue to act together in the children's affairs? Too often it is the bitterness engendered by the delays and conventions of the divorce court that comes between them. Sometimes, it is true, this is intensified by the desire of their new partners to insure a complete break with past associations. Is all this bitter quarreling necessary, and do not our obsolete laws play a greater part in creating it than do the jealousies of husbands and wives?

Many of these difficulties might be overcome or at least mitigated if divorce were both swifter and less expensive, and given never upon grounds of adultery, cruelty, or desertion but solely because of a serious desire on the part of one of the couple to cease to have a joint home; and if, furthermore, the so-called guilt or innocence of the parties were wiped out as a consideration in allotting the custody of children. The law should become a method of peaceful solution between all the parties concerned instead of remaining, as it is now, a dangerous weapon in the hands of whichever person can snatch the legal advantage.

Divorce, as it must be conducted at present, cannot fail to appear to any sensitive man and woman as scarcely worth the emotional cost or even the monetary outlay. Though many people may have cause to be grateful to sound and conscientious lawyers, how can the legal profession as a whole help having an economic interest in maintaining difficult and expensive procedure? The expense and slowness of procedure in all sorts of civil cases in England led just lately to a plea for reform on the part of some of our lawyers on the ground that clients were impatiently settling their differences out of court! The divorce situation is worse; on all sides the new wine of modern morals is bursting the old legal wine skins and more and more men and women are driven to be outlaws. One remedy might be to live by private agreement, boycotting divorce and, logically, the marriage that must precede it. The prohibition racket became intolerable and one may now hope that it will have brought the end of prohibition. The divorce racket may go the same road. There seems to be no other way out except a social revolution.

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The Secret International

By MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

Washington, January 16

IS the Secret International—the ring of munitions makers who profit by war—too strong to be smashed by public opinion or by the governments concerned? Two decades ago a campaign was launched to render the munitions industry harmless by bringing it under social control. The campaign had many ardent supporters, among them Philip Snowden, who revealed in the House of Commons just four months before the World War began how intimate was the relationship between the armaments industry and the British government. "It would be impossible," he declared, "to throw a stone on the benches opposite without hitting a member who is a shareholder in one or another of these firms." He mentioned by name several of the members of Parliament who were financially interested in the manufacture of armaments and therefore in the promotion of war. Other aspects of the ring's operations were brought to light by such writers as G. H. Perris, author of "The War Traders," and by such organizations as the Union of Democratic Control, which published its findings under the title, "The International Industry of War." The movement was measurably advanced by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which in 1915 adopted a resolution declaring:

> This International Women's Congress sees in the private profits accruing from the great arms factories a powerful hindrance to the abolition of war. It urges that by international agreement each country should take over as a state monopoly the manufacture and control of arms and munitions as a step to complete and final international disarmament.

By 1919 the movement had become so strong that the peacemakers at the Paris Conference were persuaded to write into the League Covenant a section looking definitely toward international supervision of the munitions industry. And in 1921, in compliance with this provision, a special committee of the League inquired into the activities of the armaments ring. Although the facts uncovered by the investigators were never published, the committee announced that it had arrived at the following conclusions:

> That armament firms have been active in fomenting war scares and in persuading their own countries to adopt warlike policies and to increase their armaments.
>
> That armament firms have attempted to bribe government officials both at home and abroad.
>
> That armament firms have disseminated false reports concerning the military and naval programs of various countries in order to stimulate armament expenditure.
>
> That armament firms have sought to influence public opinion through the control of newspapers in their own and foreign countries.
>
> That armament firms have organized international armament rings through which the armaments race has been accentuated by playing off one country against another.

What is the situation today? The munitions makers are still at their frightful business of fomenting war scares, coercing governments, and poisoning public opinion in order to find markets for their wares. They are still hiring propagandists—witness the Shearer case—to block disarmament. They are still delivering implements of destruction without fear or favor to governments which are likely, often with the subtle help of the arms manufacturers, to engage in quarrels with their neighbors. Munitions were pouring into Bolivia and Paraguay long before war began in the Gran Chaco; Argentina has been buying armaments in the United States under the terms of two secret loans made in 1923 and 1926; Persia has been a heavy purchaser of war materials; up to 1930 more than 99 per cent of the munitions exported from Japan went to the Chinese Nationalist armies, some of this material later being used against the Japanese invaders of Manchuria. The European munitions makers have been no more patriotic than those of Japan. The Schneider-Creusot firm of France has been just as generous in supplying arms to a former and probable future enemy as to some of France's allies. Nor does any government seem disposed to break up this international ring. Indeed, we still find government officials financially interested in corporations making war materials. To name only two, Sir John Simon and Neville Chamberlain, members of the present British Cabinet, are stockholders in Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited.

The peace societies have been trying against extraordinary odds to uncover a few facts about the activities of the munitions ring. A few months ago some of this information was published by the Union of Democratic Control in London under the title, "The Secret International." But the peace societies find themselves blocked at almost every turn. Even the League of Nations has had little or no success in getting a true picture of the operations of the munitions industry. Four years ago the League Assembly set up a commission to draft a convention providing for international supervision of the traffic in arms. As a preliminary step the commission debated the question of whether it should ask the member governments to publish periodical reports concerning armament manufacturing in their countries. The British delegate said his government could not comply. By way of explanation he declared:

> In the first place my government could not give this information; they have not got it. Secondly, it is only the manufacturers—the licensees themselves—who could furnish it, and they would certainly refuse to do so. Thirdly, we have no power to compel them to do so; and, fourthly, *very few governments would have the courage to introduce legislation to make them do so.*

A year or two later Elisabeth Waern-Bugge of Sweden set out to gather for the peace societies all the information she could find concerning the activities of the munitions ring. She consulted all the available statistical reports of the League of Nations and individual governments. She talked with or wrote to government officials, peace workers, other interested persons, and even army officers in many countries. While she managed to assemble some statistical information, she learned that "the most dangerous facts can never be found in any official report. The secret manufacture of and the

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masked trade in armaments only in a very few cases slip out of the well-guarded circles of the initiated and economically interested persons. And the reliability of what leaks out is very difficult to confirm."

The national budgets of some countries often provide for smaller expenditures on armaments than the value of the armaments actually imported by these countries. In other cases the varying methods employed by different governments in listing articles exported and imported make it difficult to obtain satisfactory information. The Swedish records show that in 1923 Sweden exported to Norway munitions valued at 491,000 crowns, but the Norwegian records show that in the same year Norway imported from Sweden munitions valued at only 139,400 crowns. In 1925, according to American trade figures, 32.2 per cent of this country's total exportation of powder went to Poland, but nowhere in the Polish trade statistics is there any record of gunpowder imported from the United States in that year. There is reason to believe that a great deal of war material enters into international trade in the guise of "sporting arms" and "fireworks," and there is plenty of evidence at hand that munitions have been shipped as "pianos," "machinery parts," and "farm implements." Contributing to the complexity of this problem is the fact that many articles adaptable to war purposes are articles of everyday use.

An interesting discovery made by Mrs. Waern-Bugge is that while Article 170 of the Treaty of Versailles forbids Germany to make or to export to foreign countries arms, ammunition, or war material of any kind, "the nations which forced on Germany the said Article 170 are themselves among its customers." Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, and even France have been buying munitions from their former enemy. The same article forbids the importation of armaments by Germany, but this has not prevented the English firm of Vickers-Armstrong from advertising its latest and most efficient type of big gun in the official magazine of the German Reichswehr. Even more startling is the discovery that the bulk of the munitions entering into world trade in the last ten years has been shipped to countries in the Pacific area. This is at least understandable in the case of China, which has suffered from perennial civil warfare, but Canada, Australia, and the Dutch East Indies have also been increasing their purchases of war supplies. Of the countries in the Pacific area only the United States has not been importing munitions, but it must be remembered that in this respect the United States is virtually self-sufficient.

More than 35 per cent of war materials in world commerce is sold by British firms. Recently Sir John Simon, British Foreign Minister, declared: "In approving the issue of licenses to export arms and ammunition to foreign countries, the Foreign Office is entirely actuated by the consideration as to whether such action would in any way affect the friendly relations of His Majesty's government with the foreign Powers concerned." In other words, the English armaments trust can sell its products wherever it pleases so long as the sale does not conflict with British foreign policy. Another large proportion of these products is shipped through Hamburg, which happens to be the free port of Czecho-Slovakia. And Czecho-Slovakia is the home of the famous Skoda works, which are a part of the French Schneider-Creusot ring. A good share of the munitions used in the Manchurian war has been—and still is being—shipped through Hamburg. The *New Statesman and Nation* of London described this traffic some months ago in the following words:

> The names of the ships with their dates of sailing are given. They show that large freights of explosives, bombs, machine-guns, airplane parts, and revolvers have left the harbors of the Elbe, bound for Japan, during February. The Skoda factories in Czecho-Slovakia sent 700 boxes of munitions via Hamburg to Japan, and on the following day a Norwegian steamer, Zoward, took 4,000 boxes of explosives from Germany on its way to Japan. And so on from day to day. . . . The Japanese Military Commission was in Czecho-Slovakia in February, and this visit was probably not unconnected with the big contract for bombs to be shipped via Trieste, on which the Skoda works were busy shortly afterwards.

But not all the munitions of war used by the Japanese have come from Czecho-Slovakia. England has had a share of this traffic; the German chemical industries have sent huge quantities of acid for making explosives; an automobile factory at Dijon, France, has been making heavy airplane bombs for the Japanese; the Schneider works at Creusot have been turning out heavy tanks. Still the sources are not exhausted. American companies have been participating in this profitable commerce, to what extent it is impossible to say.

The United States government has given some indication that it may adopt a more progressive and intelligent policy with respect to the traffic in munitions. After having contended for years that governmental supervision of the munitions industry would be unconstitutional, the State Department recently decided that the government might after all have that authority, and the League of Nations was so informed. Again, the action of Mr. Hoover in asking Congress to confer upon the President "authority in his discretion to limit or forbid shipments of arms in cases where special undertakings of cooperation can be secured with the principal arms-manufacturing nations" increases the hope that the United States may eventually be induced to meet the munitions problem honestly and squarely. But apart from these suggestions of a change in policy, the American record is as black as that of any of the European Powers.

In December, 1931, Representative Fish of New York introduced a resolution to prohibit the exportation of arms to nations at war. This was the same bill that the late Representative Burton of Ohio had for years been pressing without success. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs at first refused by a vote of six to five to hold a public hearing on the Fish resolution, on the ground that it might offend the Japanese! Later the committee was prevailed upon to grant such a hearing. Representative Fish asked Dorothy Detzer, executive secretary of the American section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, to invite witnesses to testify on behalf of the resolution. The hearing was set for February 10, 1932. At the appointed hour Miss Detzer appeared with the people who were to testify, including representatives of the National Council for the Prevention of War, the Society of Friends, and the American Legion. Numerous press correspondents were also at hand. Members of the committee were clearly disconcerted by this unexpectedly large attendance. Instead of opening the hearing, they went into executive session, which was scheduled to last five minutes but actually continued for an hour and a half. After the long secret session the committee announced that no hearing would be held. The official

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reason given was that "additional information was wanted on this question." The committee members showed resentment when they were asked "whether the munitions interests in some of the Congressional districts were behind this move." Privately the members explained that public hearings might irritate the Japanese and annoy the State Department.

> The reference to the State Department was new [Miss Detzer later explained], so that I went immediately to inquire as to the part it was playing in the suppression of the hearing, and learned that on the Sunday before, Hamilton Fish had had a conference with the President, the Secretary of State, and one of the assistant secretaries. Mr. Fish had urged the Administration at this time to support his resolution, which they had finally decided not to do. It was thought, apparently, that Mr. Fish would present his own resolution at the hearing, and that there would be no general interest in it. But when such a large group appeared before the Foreign Affairs Committee, and such a representation of the press appeared, the committee members were disturbed, and upon going into executive session called the State Department to ask for instructions or advice. The State Department requested that the public hearings be suppressed.

It was subsequently learned that conversations had taken place between France, England, and the United States with regard to possible regulation of munitions shipments to the Far East. France and England, it was stated, refused to cooperate with the United States in a munitions boycott. Legal experts in the State Department offered other reasons why the government could not prohibit such shipments from this country, but the real defense for suppressing the hearing was based on the assertion that "practically no munitions are being shipped to the Far East."

This statement was, of course, untrue. There had been plenty of evidence that arms were being sent to Japan. On February 11, the day following the suppression of the public hearing, the Washington *News* carried the following dispatch under a Richmond, Virginia, date line:

> Large quantities of nitrates believed to be for the Sino-Japanese war are being loaded this week in three ships at the wharf of the Atmospheric Nitrogen Company at Hopewell, Virginia. A Japanese ship of 10,000 tons' capacity and a British ship of 5,000 tons are expected to sail in a few days for destinations not yet announced. A German ship of 3,500 tons will be ready to sail shortly, while a fourth ship, a French boat of 6,000 tons, is expected to land later in the week to receive a cargo.

Some days later, according to a Washington dispatch to the Baltimore *Sun,* Representative Fish "published figures from the Commissioner of Customs showing that fifteen ships, mostly Japanese, had cleared from Hopewell, Virginia, loaded with nitrates, since the outbreak of hostilities in the Far East. All but two ships were destined for Japanese ports." One might in this connection also look into the unusual activity of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, Remington Arms Company, and other munitions firms, which have even taken on extra workers during a period of general depression.

It is also interesting to note that on March 28 of last year Pierre and Lammot du Pont conferred for several hours with Assistant Secretary of State Rogers and Stanley K. Hornbeck, chief of the Far Eastern Division of the State Department, and that within a few hours after this conference the word was flashed over numerous stockbrokers' tickers that the American munitions policy would not be changed. There is no way of knowing what was discussed at this conference, but it is significant that from that day to this American companies have been permitted to ship munitions to Japan.

Behind the Cables

By E. D. H.

Paris, January 2

THE gentlemen in Washington and their representatives in Europe who are wont to talk glibly though vaguely about the relation of debts and disarmament may be launching a boomerang which may land eventually on the White House lawn. Europeans are getting somewhat bored with being scolded for what they spend on arms. Doesn't the United States spend a pretty penny, too? And it is a little odd that America, still officially blind to any "connection" between war debts and reparations, should be so eager to detect a relationship between debts and disarmament. Jurists in various chancelleries here are working on a line of argument in answer to the American thesis. The conclusion is that the United States cannot demand reduction in armaments as a price for debt-cutting unless it accepts a profound modification of its own foreign policy.

DEBTS AND DISARMAMENT

The argument goes like this. Say what you will, there will be no disarmament in Europe until there is security too. Security means at the very least the organization of mutual-aid or non-aggression pacts into a thoroughgoing structure capable of offense if necessary, that is, through an international armed force. Now, no such structure can exist without British help, because the British fleet would be the chief weapon in any blockade against an eventual aggressor. And the British will not promise their help unless they are helped by the United States. Thus we reach the old, old dilemma of "sanctions" that arose with Article XVI of the League Covenant, though now it is disguised as the problem of the "elimination of neutrality." Suppose the United States should claim the conventional neutral right of trade with a belligerent. This would bring the United States into conflict with the British fleet enforcing a blockade. And instead of preventing war, the system would threaten to bring on war between Great Britain and the United States.

On the other hand, if we agree to implement the Kellogg Pact not only with a promise to consult, as Mr. Stimson has already done, but with formal renunciation of our rights as a neutral in the event of war, then disarmament becomes a practical possibility. We need not fight, or even join an economic blockade; we need merely to promise not to break the blockade which the rest of the world will presumably have set in operation against the aggressor. I imagine there will be more and more talk about this in the near future.

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Remarkable things continue to happen to the remarkable French. A fortnight after refusing to pay the United States of America $19,000,000, France agreed to lend the Republic of Austria $14,000,000. No one here thinks this is as funny as it surely is. But a little bit of secret history helps to explain it. For one thing, the loan is granted to Austria by the Powers so that they, the Powers, will not have to pay service on Austria's defaulted League loan, which is guaranteed by the governments of France, Britain, Italy, and so on. For another, it is intimately tied up with that good old bit of blackmail, the Austro-German threat of *Anschluss*. Had France refused to ratify the new loan protocol, presumably Austria would have regained to some extent its freedom of action in negotiating a customs union with Germany, since the new protocol reiterates the clause forbidding Austria to jeopardize its independence. Anybody who whispers *Anschluss* loud enough, in other words, can shake down Paris for $14,000,000. It has cost France slightly less to bribe its erstwhile enemy, Austria, to stop making eyes at Berlin than what it should have paid its former ally, America. The French look upon the Austrian loan as the final catastrophe of a catastrophic year. The Happy Results of 1932, according to the *Journal des Débats,* are that Germany need not pay but receives the right to arm; that France must pay and is going to be compelled to disarm. It's a grand thing to win a war these days!

COOLING OFF IN FRANCE

The French default has, of course, proved beyond doubt that the Almighty Himself has returned to the Wilhelmstrasse. Nothing could have played better into Schleicher's calm, patient hands. It will probably keep him impregnably in office for two years or more. What was all that talk about the "sanctity of written agreements," about the "validity of those instruments which preserve the status quo"? Let the French whisper about German treaty repudiation and what an answer they will get.

Please note that Pierre Comert has given notice of resignation of his League job. This is the sort of small item which scarcely gets into the papers and which it is the special function of this correspondent to report. On the individual tastes, emotions, sympathies, and predilections of single isolated personalities—many of them semi-anonymous, tucked away inconspicuously in the upper civil services of various capitals—a great deal of inner political history may irrationally depend. Pierre Comert is chief of the information section of the secretariat of the League of Nations. He was certainly not incompetent, and the technical machinery he created for his job is admirable, but he was not an international civil servant; he was a Frenchman, and a Frenchman in a crucially important post. Comert fell victim to a strange deal. The Germans had balked at Avenol as Drummond's successor as Secretary-General until some exceedingly bright member of the German delegation changed the German strategy to acceptance of Avenol, a nonentity, provided that Comert, a powerful personage, went. Publicly, it was simply said that if a Frenchman became Secretary-General, not too many other Frenchmen should have topflight posts. Thus the struggle over Drummond's job was a smoke screen behind which Comert was virtually dismissed. Comert's first assistant and presumptive deputy is Arthur Sweetser, an American. If Sweetser gets the permanent post, and almost everyone at Geneva hopes he will, he will take rank as the first American "cabinet minister" in the League. Sweetser's great power at Geneva has been his unofficial pipe-line to politicians and philanthropists in New York and Washington. As to Comert, he gets a pretty plum; he becomes director of information in the office of the French Premier.

COMERT OUT, SWEETSER IN.

I find here in Paris that the new eight-Power "bloc of democracies" is taken with some seriousness. This bloc, comprising the Geneva delegations of Spain, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Czecho-Slovakia, all democratic Powers, is mostly a product of those fertile little busybodies, Señor Madariaga and M. Eduard Benes. It came into being largely to support the Herriot security plan. By no means officially cohesive, it may nevertheless exert a good deal of healthy pressure at Geneva. These Powers have been behind what counter-attack there has been against the Japanese. Three of them, with Ireland, forced Matsuoka into an almost open threat to leave the League. Madariaga and Benes are likely to get into serious trouble if they continue to be bold, honest, and decent.

THE EIGHT-POWER BLOC

It is difficult these days to leave the debts alone. One item puzzles Europe more than almost any other thing. In the British note of December 1 and in Chamberlain's later speech in the House of Commons it was stated flatly enough to make your head ache that "the initiative in devising a settlement of reparations was taken by the creditor governments at Lausanne with the cognizance and approval of the United States government." Yet Washington continues to deny any connection, even morganatic, between debts and reparations! Why no protest, then, at this slander? Has the White House risen in wrath to smite its defamers dead? It has not—for the very good reason that the White House knows that the defamers speak the truth.

DEBTS AGAIN

This, I imagine, may explain one of Europe's greatest mysteries, namely, the complete disappearance from the normal habitats of human life of Hugh Gibson, once known as a Hoover diplomat. Mr. Gibson has been swallowed up without trace. I can find no one in Paris who has seen or heard of him for three months. Let us recall that romantic meeting on the evening of June 20, at Morges, a little village between Lausanne and Geneva, when Mr. Gibson ventured to talk to M. Herriot about "disarmament," later continuing his discussions with MacDonald and Papen at Lausanne. The talk *may* have been only on disarmament. But it is commonly said that Papen, arguing at the time for a clean slate on reparations, was dissuaded from this view because someone, possibly Mr. Gibson, told him that the United States would do what it could to "scale down" the debts if reparations in turn were simply scaled down, and not canceled. Certainly since that time the Powers have assumed an inevitable correspondence between the final reparations figures and the eventual debt figures. This goes to explain Europe's feeling that it was "betrayed." No one knows, of course, or will tell, exactly what Mr. Gibson said or promised. But whatever it was, it seems to have been of such a nature that ever since he has had to be most carefully put on ice, salted down, and hidden.

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Our Mangled Compensation Laws

By HELEN BUCKLER

IN a multiplicity of plans for erecting a bulwark against economic instability, attention has somehow passed over one extremely pregnable spot. If, even when times are good, we have half a million unemployed, we have also two millions, or four times as many, thrown violently out of work each year for shorter or longer periods, many of them forever, by injuries received on their jobs. Despite compensation laws in forty-four States, the fate of these workers and their dependents remains largely fortuitous and a definite source of trouble in our national well-being. The wage loss of injured workmen in this country each year totals $1,000,000,000; of this sum, representing the livelihood of a host of families, only $150,000,000 is restored through compensation and medical aid. Besides the pain and the suffering, most of the cost of industry's hazards is borne by the victims. The burden is passed on in part to their children, 14,000 of whom are annually left fatherless. Every ten years the number of industrial orphans reaches a figure great enough to populate the city of Nashville, while the security of an even larger group is threatened by accidents which disable the family breadwinner and render precarious his future chances of earning a living.

Before we contemplate any further forms of social insurance in this country, we should examine critically our first abortive attempt in that direction. What we see is a chaotic series of illogical provisions, at once unscientific and unethical. The existing statutes embrace but falteringly the accepted principle that "the risk of economic loss through personal injury in the course of production should be borne by the industry." Indeed, so insufficiently do they reimburse the injured that they scarcely merit the designation "compensation" laws. In the first place, millions of workers still stand outside the pale of legal relief, inadequate as it is. In four States the worker must depend for redress entirely upon the expensive and uncertain damage suit. And not one of the other forty-four States protects *all* its workers. Exemptions are made for certain industries on grounds of too much hazard, or not enough hazard, or for equally contradictory and unsound reasons. There is no protection for men in cotton-ginning in Texas, in logging in Maine, in distilling in Kentucky.

Office workers are unprotected in twelve States. Interstate transportation workers have no coverage anywhere in the Union. In more than half the States relief is denied to workers in shops employing less than a stipulated number; in Georgia the minimum is ten, in Alabama sixteen. Yet the smaller concerns outnumber the larger ones in this country and employ most of the workmen. Still other exemptions are made. Casual employees, who probably need protection more than any other class, indirect employees working for subcontractors, home workers in the sweated trades, the army of self-employing workmen—all of these suffer omission under the statutes; while the farm laborer who loses his hand in a threshing machine and the domestic servant who loses her in a clothes-wringer must seek redress as best they can.

There is, however, no more distressing provision in the laws than the insistence that an injury must be sudden if the victim is to be compensated. The man who drives a truck may fall off his seat into a pool of water, contract pneumonia, and die, and his family will receive compensation without question. But let him work all day in the rain, contract pneumonia, and die, and there is no recompense. Let a man break a bottle and splash acid on his hands, and he is compensated for his burns. But let him work with the same acid over a long period, gradually contracting the same sort of ulceration, and the law allows him nothing at all.

Only five States and the federal government where it has jurisdiction require without reservation compensation for occupational diseases as well as for sudden injuries arising out of employment. Six other States go less than halfway in establishing official lists of certain illnesses caused by specific substances and declaring that these and these alone must be compensated for—a compromise resulting in both bizarre and tragic miscarriages of justice. All other States refuse compensation for disease, mainly through fear of imposing too heavy a burden upon industry. Yet Wisconsin firms pay for complete insurance coverage not a penny more than firms in other States pay for accident coverage alone.

What of the workers who remain eligible after all these exclusions are made? To what sort of relief are they entitled? Before answering the question it should be pointed out that a sincere, reasonable, and effective compensation act should contain these two essential provisions: the wages of the injured workman should be paid so that his family may be cared for while he is incapacitated; the injured man himself should receive the best possible therapeutic attention in order that he may be restored to his former productive capacity as quickly and as completely as possible. Instead, investigation discloses that the legislatures have imposed limitations so numerous and so onerous as largely to defeat these purposes.

New Mexico grants a man medical attention for only ten days, no matter how serious his injury. New Hampshire and Vermont allow him fourteen days. Alabama and Tennessee require an industry to spend no more than $100 on an injured man for restorative purposes. Only fourteen States impose no limitation on time or money. Nobody knows how much permanent crippling has resulted from the failure to allow sufficient funds for the best treatment for broken bones, amputations, and internal injuries, or from the refusal to realize that operations are often needed a year or more after the injury to relieve adhesions, malformations, or ankylosis. Yet unlimited curative relief, according to the late E. H. Downey, would cost only a bagatelle in proportion to the pay roll.

The amount of recompense for the wage loss itself has been affected by the suspicion, sincere or not, that malingering may occur. As a result, instead of the whole wage only a percentage is allowed, with the single exception that Wisconsin favors its school teachers with full pay during disability. In the most generous States, sixteen in all, the allowance for injury is no more than two-thirds of a man's pay.

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This proportion is variously decreased in other States. In fifteen of them only half the wage is paid. In other words, the great majority of injured workers are penalized on account of a small, undefined minority. Insurance companies themselves testified to Professor Lindsay Rogers, investigator for the Governor of New York State, that they had encountered fewer frauds in workmen's compensation cases than in other forms of insurance.

These wage percentages, ungenerous as they are, tell only part of the story. It must be added that an injured man may draw one-half or two-thirds of his pay only up to a certain sum. In several States this maximum is as low as $12 a week. Nowhere in the country is it higher than $27, the sum allowed to injured volunteer firemen in Michigan. As large a sum as $25 is allowed only in New York, California, the District of Columbia, and in the case of longshoremen working for the federal government. By setting up these arbitrary maximums, by requiring waiting periods of from three days to two weeks, by limiting the benefit period, and by figuring earnings on unjust bases, such beneficence as existed in the acts has been vitiated more and more. In reality the worker is bearing as much as 80 per cent of the cost of injury in the least generous of our States and fully half the burden in the better-disposed States. Yet if these starvation maximums were removed from the laws, if the percentage were increased to 75 per cent of the wage, and if a waiting period of only three days were required, the injured man's actual loss would still amount to one-third of his pay.

Even greater injustice is suffered in cases of death. The dead cannot malinger. Yet only seven States, and the federal government in the case of civil employees, pay compensation to the widow (or dependent widower) until her death or remarriage. All other States limit the total amount of compensation, or the number of weeks it shall run, or both, while Oklahoma pays no death compensation whatever. Pennsylvania, Delaware, Idaho, and Wyoming continue payments to children through the period of compulsory school attendance, although they terminate the widow's compensation after six or eight years. In two-thirds of the States the same compensation for death is paid to the widow with seven children as to the widow with none. The monetary value placed upon a man's life by the different States varies widely. Most of them set the figure no higher than $4,000, $5,000, or $6,000. South Dakota places the amount as low as $3,000. Just over the line, however, North Dakota grants $15,000 to the family deprived of its breadwinner; Vermont withdraws compensation from the victim's family after five years. Other States extend the period only a little more. Comparatively considered, the limit of 500 weeks, or almost ten years, set in Massachusetts is liberal.

What do these laws mean when translated into actual experience? A study made of fatal industrial-accident cases in California and Ohio shows that 57 per cent of the children left dependent are not over ten years old when their fathers are killed. A four-year study in Pennsylvania shows that the majority of children orphaned by industry are under eight, more than a third are under five, and nearly a sixth are under two. In most cases, then, these children are not yet self-supporting when death benefits cease. Indeed, many of them have not even entered the public schools.

Or consider the widow of fifty—and one-fifth of industrial widows are this age. Usually her entire adult life has been spent in housekeeping, so that she is untrained, if she is not too old, for outside work. To limit the period of her compensation is to hasten the day when she must go to the almshouse. Even funeral costs are only partially borne by the industry to which a man gives his life. Not a single State allows enough for this last sad purpose. Kentucky and New Mexico grant only $75, although the average cost for industrial policy holders the country over is $308.

Perhaps the cruelest situation of all obtains, not when a man is killed, but when he is rendered helpless and still lives on, a suffering burden to the family deprived of his support. Here again there can be no question of malingering, or very little and that easily discernible. But in only nine States is compensation paid to a totally incapacitated man as long as he lives, and even in those the sums are too small to care for the injured, with no provision for his family. California, Idaho, Illinois, and Utah provide that payments shall continue during total disability, but shall be reduced after from four to eight years to lesser amounts, in the case of Idaho to $6 a week. Some States give with the right hand only to take away with the left. South Dakota, for instance, states that benefits shall be for life, and then limits the amount payable to $3,000. The typical compensation act provides only partial support for about one-third of the remaining life expectancy. In eighteen States a minor's compensation expires before he is thirty.

It is, however, in cases of permanent partial disabilities that the American compensation measures are most irrational. Instead of awards based on age, occupation, and adaptability for rehabilitation—logical considerations, which the French, for instance, have recognized—we have in every State except Wisconsin, California, and New Hampshire flat-rate schedules that are as unscientific as they are inequitable. In most cases a young man will manifestly suffer less wage reduction from the loss of a member than will an older man. He has greater powers of adaptability. A finger is worth more to a violinist than to a salesman. Yet all are paid alike. The rate of compensation is usually the same as for total disability, but the duration of the payments, in spite of the fact that the injury is permanent, is limited to so many weeks for an eye, so many for an arm or leg, so many for a hand or a foot. In these matters the States maintain a wide diversity. Massachusetts values an arm and a leg equally and places the limit for compensation at 50 weeks. Alabama, on the other hand, judges the loss of an arm to be greater than that of a leg by 25 weeks and values the latter at 175 weeks. Indeed, compensation for the loss of a leg may continue for from 50 to 381 weeks, depending upon whether the injured has the luck to reside in Massachusetts or Oregon, and this same remarkable variation is found in all the schedules for loss of limb.

Minors and learners who are permanently maimed, either partially or totally, are in particularly distressing situations in many States. Twenty-seven States award compensation to minors which is based merely on their actual wages when injured, regardless of the fact that they had not yet reached their full development and that the injury means they never will reach it. As for the illegally employed child, sixteen States refuse him any compensation whatever. Only eleven States reverse this medieval position and penalize the employer.

This, then, is a brief picture of how the principle of

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compensation has been circumscribed and distorted on our statute books. Translated into terms of actual experience the results are no less than tragic. A study made of industrial-injury cases in four States—New York, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, two of them comparatively liberal, the other two less so—shows that over half the injured workers had been earning $30 a week or less. In Massachusetts and Wisconsin 70 per cent of them had earned this small wage. In other words, the man who is hurt or killed at his work is, in most cases, the very man who earns less than the income which sociologists have set as the necessary minimum for healthful and decent standards of living for a family of five in our American cities. This income allows no margin for savings or insurance, so that in the case of the larger proportion of injured workers, the family needs aid and needs it immediately. It is to people so situated that this inadequate compensation has been granted.

Analysis of fatal industrial cases in two other States, California and Ohio, revealed that 27.1 per cent of families carrying on a separate home life were unable to do so after the breadwinner was killed. "Children were scattered in orphanages, boarded out by public agencies, sent to live, often unwelcomed, in the families of relatives, or adopted by strangers. . . . Before the death of the family supporter only 1.5 per cent of these families were dependent on charity, private or public; when investigated this number had increased to 17.6 per cent." A similar study in New York, a comparatively if not a genuinely generous State, leads to the conclusion that "the injured workman, in spite of compensation legislation, still bears so much of the cost of the injury that in many cases he completely loses his economic foothold."

Must these things be? Who can say so when it has been estimated that adequate and just scales of compensation would add but 10 cents to the cost of a $60 suit of clothes, 35 cents to the cost of a $14-ton of anthracite coal, and $200 to the cost of a $10,000 home? To complete this story there should be added the shortcomings of administration of insurance, a chapter in itself, for the principle of compensation has been as much nullified in practice as it has been mangled in legislation.

Is it at all surprising that the railway brotherhoods have remained indifferent, if not actually hostile, to the compensation laws? They prefer, under the circumstances, to take their chances with a liability suit. Meanwhile, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics has received so many letters from workmen throughout the country asking, "How is it that this man is compensated and I am not?"—"How is it this factory is covered and mine is excluded?"—and so on, that Ethelbert Stewart, former commissioner of the bureau, declared that "in the minds of a very significant percentage of the working people the whole compensation scheme and theory are skidding, and skidding very rapidly."

Oakland's "Sewer-Pipe City"

By JAMES MUNSEY

TWO months ago I heard that there was going to be plenty of work at Oakland, California. Two huge bridge projects had been authorized, and were almost ready to be started. I was at that time in Everett, Washington, about nine hundred miles away.

The Everett mills for a long time have been running at from 5 to 25 per cent of capacity. The majority of the mill workers are out of work. I have had nothing to do, except odd jobs, for two years. I have tried for work in the East and in the South. Finding no work anywhere, I had come home. It is somehow easier to starve among friends.

The Oakland bridge project looked like a good chance to get work. I started south, setting out in a driving rain. (It rains almost every day in western Washington.) By the time I had traveled a mile, I was soaking wet. I made seventy-six miles, thumbing my way, the first day. The next day I made about a hundred and twenty miles. Then forty miles. I counted thirty-eight people living under a bridge between Tacoma and Seattle. There were several hundred under Portland bridges.

Oregon police told me that it was against the law to hitch-hike. "Grab a handful of box-cars," they ordered. At Hornbrook, California, the fourth night, I caught a nine-o'clock passenger train south. Hopped it as it pulled out of the station. Rode on the entrance steps of the last car, huddled up under the iron trapdoor. Snow was on the ground. The wind and the iron were icy. After two hours I was afraid I might lose my hold. (The tips of your fingers catch the edge of the topmost stair; any unusual jar would make you let go after your fingers lose their sense of feeling.) About eleven o'clock, when I got off to shake the kink out of my spine at a little station, I looked up at the windows to see if everyone was asleep. The lights were all out in the Pullman. So I jumped the tail end of the car when the train pulled out. I had been there for about half an hour, feeling much more comfortable, standing up instead of crouching over in a tiny space, when the brakeman came through. He jumped back when he saw me. He was very angry; said the train was a special mail train with five mail coaches, and I could get ten years for boarding it. He backed into the car; it happened to be slowing down just then getting into Dunsmuir; I jumped off.

Down in the jungle south of Dunsmuir I came on a crowd of about thirty men waiting for a one-o'clock freight south; it was freezing, but no one wanted to light a fire for fear of being driven away. Soon the word came that the freight would not pull out until three o'clock. So some of us climbed into box-cars on the sidings and slept a couple of hours. Of course, you really couldn't call it sleep. In our box-car we had only one layer of newspaper between us and the floor, and the sliding door had to be kept open so we wouldn't miss the freight. Only one fellow had a roll with him. The freight actually went out at seven in the morning, by which time we were all thoroughly chilled. Negroes, Mexicans, Scandinavians, Indians, and native whites made up our particular bunch. No one had any food.

We rode that freight train to Gerber, a town about two

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hours north of Sacramento. There the police drove us out of town. We met other men bound for the Bay region. There were about a hundred of us at the edge of town. The police harried us constantly, driving us here and there. When the next freight went south, we all hopped it, and rode in the ice holes of the refrigerator cars. These holes are about three feet wide, ten feet long, and seven feet high. You get into one through an entrance trapdoor in the top of the car. There is no light and no ventilation. The walls are of perforated zinc and wire mesh. Whenever the smell of urine, or of the dirty melted ice, makes you nauseated, you climb out. In and out, in and out, all the time for air. There were about three fellows in each compartment on our freight train.

At Davis—a junction point between San Francisco and Sacramento—we heard of a fast freight that would be pulling out of the yards for Oakland. We waited and jumped it. It was traveling very fast. The fellows' legs would trail out like flags in the wind, and their arms would be jerked almost out of their sockets when they grabbed the little iron ladders. Cinders and sparks flew low over the train, and the wind was blowing a gale, so it became increasingly difficult to come up for a breath of fresh air.

Just before we boarded the car we were told that the police met every train that arrived in the Oakland freight yards, and that numbers of men were sent off to work camps, where the conditions were very bad. And so, to avoid that possibility, the fellows in our compartment and the next one determined to get off before we reached the terminal. Approaching the edge of the yards our train was traveling rapidly (a "fast freight" travels about as fast as an interurban train); it began to slow up and we jumped off just as it reached the entrance to the yards. We all took headers. In falling I broke my right wrist and skinned one side of my face on the surface of a parallel rail. Another fellow tore the front of his only shirt to shreds. Another sustained a wrench in the back that probably will be with him for years to come.

There were six of us in that group. We separated at once and went off in different directions. I walked about six blocks down to San Pablo Boulevard. There a restaurant man gave me a hamburger and a cup of coffee and phoned for a doctor. I got fixed up in an emergency hospital—X-ray, treatment, splints, and sling. The nurse sent me to the home of a friend of hers, where I stayed for a couple of days. Then I went out to enter my name for the bridge work. But I was unable to make connections with anyone who was doing or going to do any of it.

That night I went to the "Woodpile"—a sort of local welfare and relief place. I got a ticket that entitled me to one night's lodging and three meals. That was all I could get. Being a "transient," I was told to move on, to go to the next town. But fellows were coming in from the south and the east and the north, and they brought word that things were quite bad everywhere else, so I saw no reason why I should travel from place to place if I could possibly make a go of it here.

I met a man who told me about "Sewer-Pipe City." I walked down to the foot of Fifteenth Avenue, and knew at once that I would join the fellows there.

Sewer-Pipe City has upwards of two hundred residents just now. I think it likely that it will have five hundred before the winter is over. Everyone lives in a section of sewer pipe. "If the city owned this property," one of the men said, "we would have been driven off long ago. But the man who owns it insists that he can let us stay here if he wishes, so the police have been obliged to let us alone. He pays the water charge—he runs that sewer-pipe factory over there—and doesn't mind if we live in his pipes."

I picked out a pipe to live in, collected a few stones, and made a little stove. Then I went along the docks and picked up pieces of wood. My fire didn't work very well until I got a smokestack. I found a rusty old metal smokestack, rotten and full of holes, lying near a shed. I got wrapping-paper and gunny-sacks and tied them with wire at one end of the pipe to keep the wind out. The first day the fellows who had food invited me to eat with them. That night I had a blanket, lent me by a man who could spare it. The next day I went out and bummed a quilt and blanket. Then I got into the regular life of the city.

We all work together for the common good. One fellow goes out and cuts grass or picks up a man's yard or cleans up a garage, for meat. Another fellow goes out and works at any little thing to get some potatoes. A third gets bread; a fourth, coffee and salt and sugar. There are some stores that will give you a little food if you ask them. Eight or ten of us eat around one table, made from planks nailed together. About half of the fellows are out looking for work; the other half look after the city and go for food. We have not organized and we're not going to. The police would drive us out of town if we organized. The reason is that any organization at all would have to be Communist, because that's the way the fellows feel; and any Communist organization as big as that would be broken up by the police even though its members were living peacefully on private property.

In the Driftway

IN recording the death in Memphis the other day of Captain George Peters Lee, the newspapers noted that his passing removed the last of a famous steamboat family to follow the Mississippi River. The historic Lee Line itself came to an end more than two years ago when its sole surviving vessel, the Valley Queen, was sold for excursion purposes. That disrupted finally the sailings of a company started soon after the Civil War by James Lee, grandfather of the captain who has just died. Three vessels bore in succession the name Robert E. Lee, the first passing into history as the winner of the race against the Natchez from New Orleans to St. Louis, when for half a week the vessels fought their way up the swirling current, sending the roar of their engines throbbing out across low, muddy banks and filling the sky at night with a trailing cloud of embers coughed out of wood-devouring furnaces. For years the Lee Line's vessels were in the van of elegance and speed, though there were others with more religiously imposing names, such as those celebrated in the roustabouts' rhyme:

Oh, de Golden Rule and de Golden Crown,
De Golden City and de Paris C. Brown;
You takes de Rule and you meets de Crown,
And gits ter Memphis on de Paris C. Brown.

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But although he was the last river man of a noted steamboat family, Captain Lee was not a veteran of the great days on the Mississippi. He was only fifty-seven years old when he died, and even his adolescence did not reach back to the magic era when a swashbuckling America nobly gambled and blasphemed and ate and drank and shot its way up and down the Father of Waters. Perhaps the last of the skippers whose experience stretched back to the great days was Captain L. V. Cooley, who lived until less than a year ago.

* * * * *

THE Drifter counts it among his pieces of good fortune that he knew this kind and wise and full-flavored old philosopher of an earlier America and made a voyage with him in 1930. At that time Captain Cooley, then in his seventy-fifth year, had spent a little trifle of three score years on the Mississippi and its tributaries. His memories extended back to Mark Twain, whom he esteemed as a steamboat man in considerable moderation.

"River men don't think so much of Mark," was Captain Cooley's verdict. "The way he wrote, you know, you wouldn't think there was ever anybody on a steamboat except the pilot."

"Was he a good pilot?"

"Oh, not so good, not so good. There never was a good pilot could do anything but pilot a steamboat. Mark Twain could write, couldn't he? Well?"

* * * * *

WHEN the Drifter traveled with him, Captain Cooley was taking the steamer Ouachita (you pronounce it Washitaw after you've heard somebody else say it) over the longest route of any river boat out of New Orleans. He went up the Mississippi, Old, Red, Black, and Ouachita rivers to Camden, Arkansas, nearly 700 miles. It took five to six days upstream, less for the return trip. The steamboat was still making the run when the Drifter last heard—as delightful an inland trip as could be found in America, through a country still as primitive in all essentials as it was fifty years ago. Captain Cooley's business was way freight, and the Ouachita stopped to leave a barrel of flour here, take on a few bales of cotton there, and again for a load of wood for its furnaces. Nothing could be simpler. The pilot merely pushed the steamboat's pug nose into the mud bank, and the landing stage—suspended like a guillotine above the deck—was swung ashore, the roustabouts swarming after it in their famous "coonjine" step—a cross between a walk, a run, and a clog, the father of jazz dancing, it would seem, in all its variations.

* * * * *

IS such steamboating only an echo of the past, a vestige of former romance doomed soon to extinction? The Drifter happens to think not. His guess is that the craze for speed has about spent itself. For business purposes speed will continue in demand, but for pleasure, is not a return to more leisurely transit a probability of the future? If so, inland waters will see a return of the steamboat, for there is no means by which one can get more rest, more satisfaction, or more beauty in travel.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

A Neat Distinction

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In your issue of December 21 Paul Y. Anderson exposes himself to criticism of the most serious kind. In discussing the Washington hunger march, his evident dislike of the Communists seems to have led him to the same type of biased, smug assumptions that we have come to expect from the editorial pages of the Chicago *Tribune*. In the most astonishing of these statements he confesses that he had a great deal of sympathy for the bonus marchers but very little for the Communists. A very neat distinction for a professed liberal! If you happen to be a flag-waving bonus man you may starve with the sympathy of Paul Y. Anderson; if you're a Communist, starve and be damned—or go back where you came from. He also implies that the Communists were cowardly in not allowing themselves to be slaughtered by thick-skulled but fully armed cops. "The American Communist," he says, "is not a natural fighting man."

Last but not least, he characterizes the whole thing as "foolish and futile." It has surely been demonstrated by now, and admitted in your own columns, that the few benefits received by the unemployed have been the result of militant agitation engendered by the Communists and other organizations. On what grounds, then, could this demonstration, bringing the plight of hungry men and women directly before the country, be deemed "foolish and futile"? The only apparently justifiable grounds for this assertion were the danger of a slaughter by police and military, and the privations suffered in the capital. The first of these contingencies was taken care of by the Communists themselves, who refused to be drawn into a slaughter. The privations suffered were real enough but nothing that a true Communist would not gladly go through for his cause.

Chicago, December 23 PETER A. LEVINE

One Remedy

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The most obvious and practical step toward a rational economic readjustment is the limitation of the hours of labor. Clearly, in this competitive era limitation by the forty-eight States would not be effective. Such a plan as the following would be flexible and would work a minimum of hardship.

First, there should be an amendment to the Constitution of the United States empowering Congress to regulate hours of labor (without regard to its power over interstate commerce and so forth). Second, the following legislation should be passed by Congress:

1. Assuming the maximum working week to be now sixty hours, that figure to be reduced by two hours each month whenever the Department of Labor shall report more than one and a half million workers unemployed. (The reduction of the working week will therefore be gradual.)

2. Reduction to continue as stated until a legal working week of thirty hours has been reached.

3. Whenever the Department of Labor shall find that less than one million workers are unemployed, the legal working week to be increased by two hours each month until a maximum of forty-six hours has been reached.

Machinery has yielded large dividends in leisure and wealth. Concentration of leisure is as dangerous as concentration of wealth. A shorter week is one remedy.

Washington, January 1 WILLOUGHBY WISE

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Remonstrance

To the Editors of The Nation:

This remonstrance concerning free speech and freedom of religious belief is addressed to a certain school of American literary critics.

Why should *The Nation* place a ban
To bar the truths of Goethe-Haus,
Expelled by Mr. Fadiman
Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass?
Why must Miss Willa Cather write
The thoughts of Mr. Dreiser?
What if her thoughts be more complex,
Original, and wiser?
Should readers exorcise her,
Taboo her and despise her?
Must truth be hushed in earth's sex-college,
Except for Mr. Dreiser's knowledge?

Suppose that Mr. Hemingway
Is not my god,
Why must I stay
To wreathe his shrine with garlands gay,
Nor let my pious footsteps stray
To wander on the rich-hued strand
Of worship down that wide-flung way
Ibañez strewed with blood and sand?
If Mr. Ernest Hemingway
Is not my god
Why must I pray
Before his shrine the livelong day,
Although my eyelids nod,
And poppied slumbers on them sink
As heroes take their millionth drink
Beside the bull-pen's sod?

Once, in the days of William James,
We entered the Olympic games
Of thought. We prized the spacious room
We gave to Contrarieties
Of Speech, and to Varieties
Of Views about our Doom,
Salvation, Improprieties,
Our Faiths and our Dubieties
From Cambridge to Khartum.
But we have changed all that today!
"No longer write in your own way!"
Dictator Critics firmly say—
"Nor keep your own Religion!
"You must not be an Anglican,
"A Catholic, a Lutheran,
"Nor have your own opinion
"On Science, Sex, or God, or Man,
"Or even Prohibition!"

Let Mr. Dreiser keep his creed,
If that creed be his pleasure.
Let Mr. Hemingway his meed
Drink, and be drunk at leisure.
But do not ask that I should read,
That I should think, that I should heed
Only their thoughts on life; or need
Nothing beyond their measure.

Chicago, December 10 Edith Franklin Wyatt

The Film Forum

To the Editors of The Nation:

In answer to the need for an organization that will present unusual, experimental, and important films the Film Forum has been established in New York and will be extended to other cities in the next few months. The Film Forum will depart from the "good box office" standard of the commercial movie house and the "arty" standard of the little theater. It will show to its membership pictures of social and cinematographic importance—foreign and domestic films that are now neglected because they differ with the social, political, and moral status quo; films that represent an artistic advance in movie making; newsreels that reflect social events customarily suppressed by commercial newsreel organizations. Typical feature films will be "Kühle Wampe" (Hooverville), a German story of an unemployed and evicted family, called the best film of the year in Germany although it was drastically cut by the censorship; Dovshenko's latest film "Ivan," a drama of the workers on the Dnieperstroi project; "Festival of St. Jorgens," a Russian farce satirizing religious superstition.

The Film Forum hopes to encourage projects for making similar pictures in this country, and will dedicate all proceeds above expenses to such enterprises, notably to workers' newsreel organizations. The New York meetings will be held at the New School for Social Research on Sunday afternoons and evenings beginning January 22, and will be open only to members and their guests. Inquiries about the Film Forum should be addressed to the secretary at 125 West Forty-fifth Street, New York.

Nation readers in other cities who are interested in seeing the plan extended should communicate with the Film Forum at the same address.

New York, January 18 Sidney Howard

Humor and the D. A. R.

To the Editors of The Nation:

It was my privilege a few weeks ago to listen to a particularly oratorical orator orate upon the excellences and virtues of his ancestors who had played important parts in the American Revolution. The descendant waxed eloquent as he recounted the trials and tribulations which had beset his revered forbears. He paid a splendid tribute to those men who had faced bitter struggle, who had suffered loss of prestige, of fortune, of life itself, in furthering the rebellion which led to the founding of these United States. But it was the peroration of the mellifluous address which especially fascinated me, which indeed left me staring at the speaker in open-mouthed wonder and bewilderment.

> Think of it! [concluded our orator]. Our ancestors saw their kinsmen, those they loved, shot down at their sides as rebels! Those glorious ancestors of ours, men of the noblest purpose, men of the greatest integrity, men of ideals, men of vision, those men of heroic stature were looked upon in their day as rebels! Therefore it behooves us, their descendants, to make sure that no rebels are suffered in this land of ours. We must make it our solemn duty to see to it that this nation which our ancestors helped to found must not be disintegrated and split asunder by rebels. We must keep our country for those who believe in liberty and opportunity for all!

The speaker was entirely in earnest. That he was giving voice to one of the most exquisite jokes of this day and genera-

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tion never crossed his mind. For both the D. A. R. and the S. A. R. are motivated by this very conviction—that since their glorious ancestors were rebels, it behooves them to wage a war of extermination upon all rebels.

And yet, in view of the heritage of the members of these organizations, might not the orator have spoken somewhat as follows?

> In their day, our revered ancestors were regarded as rebels, treated with suspicion and contumely. We, their descendants, must regard with sympathy all who are so looked upon today. Furthermore, we shall consider it our high privilege to keep the sacred flame of rebellion aglow in the heart of man, and bend every effort toward the recognition that dissatisfaction and discontent are the distinguishing mark of the true patriot, while contentment and acquiescence are the brand of the smug and unthinking.

If this were the creed of our "Sons" and our "Daughters," the three letters which stand at the head of this article would no longer bring a smile to the lips of the average citizen. Instead, they would stand as a flaming warning against intolerance and bigotry. It really does not seem too much to expect. I am a "Daughter" myself, and tolerance is the creed by which I try to live. I am certain that it is the creed of many who form the minority within the association.

New York, January 10 ANNIE NATHAN MEYER

For Tom Mooney

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The Governor of California says the Tom Mooney case is closed. Eighteen thousand Californians, in a recent mass-meeting, shouted "No!" The Wickersham Commission report, revealing that the Mooney prosecution was a frame-up, should declare an even louder no, but unless financial support is immediately forthcoming, Governor Rolfe may be proved right.

Tom Mooney writes us from his cell in San Quentin: "If my plans fail now there is no telling when I will have another chance to leave here alive. There is a possibility, at this time, of forcing the courts and the Governor to act, if the aroused and aggressive mass pressure of public opinion for my pardon is crystallized immediately. I make this desperate appeal to you for immediate help. I beg you not to fail me."

Please send some contribution today to the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee, P. O. Box 1475, San Francisco, California.

ARTISTS' AND WRITERS' COMMITTEE FOR TOM MOONEY

San Francisco, January 10

Anna Garlin Spencer

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The Anna Garlin Spencer Memorial Committee sends out a request for letters, clippings, and other material relating to the late Anna Garlin Spencer, lecturer in social science, Teachers College, Columbia University, whose long career in social reform included leadership in movements for social hygiene, suffrage, peace, training of social workers, liberal theology, religious education, international organizations of women, race equality, divorce and family solidarity, and social education. I shall greatly appreciate loans of material which will contribute to a fuller knowledge of Mrs. Spencer's active career, which lasted from 1870 to 1931. Such material should be sent to me at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

New York, January 1 BENJAMIN R. ANDREWS

Letters of Oscar W. Firkins

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The University of Minnesota Press in Minneapolis is planning to publish a volume of letters of the late Oscar W. Firkins. The editors of the press will appreciate it if readers of *The Nation* having any of Mr. Firkins's letters will communicate with them. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

Minneapolis, January 1

Contributors to This Issue

DORA RUSSELL will shortly publish a book, "In Defence of Children," which includes material on the economics of marriage and divorce.

HELEN BUCKLER, formerly a member of *The Nation* staff, is a free-lance writer.

JAMES MUNSEY is the pseudonym of an unemployed worker.

RAYMOND LARSSON is the author of "O City, Cities."

LIONEL TRILLING is a member of the English department of Columbia University.

S. K. RATCLIFFE, British publicist and lecturer, is a regular contributor to the London *Spectator*.

C. K. BAUER is working on a book on housing and modern architecture.

HORACE GREGORY has recently published a translation of Catullus.

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The ENGINEERS and the PRICE SYSTEM

By Thorstein Veblen

Viking Press New York

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Books, Architecture, Drama

Brought as a Sheaf

By RAYMOND LARSSON

And yet
these mists slide windward like a sigh

Leaves fade
and are a drifted waste—
shift
and are the wind's word, sifted sighs.

Here where were voices now are cries.

Eyes
turn to leaves adrift: the season
burns. The heart is wind's for its
unleafing, and the tongue
is winter's.
Here leaves
fade and are a drifted waste
paced by the sharp wind's gusts—the
season's hounds.

Now these with empty hands have come
among the leaves here, and have brought
the little of breath left in their flesh—
brief, brief—and drifted grief.

Lord:
were the days gone so among us—
leaf-drift in a crispened heap? Whence? wherefore? how?—
Now! as a sheaf!—here! mixed of grief—these
to Thy garnering—these! these!

Lord: Thy sun sprung up among us as great grain,
here we have come as evening comes
who has brought peace
in sheaves—our darkness, our dark grief
brought as our sheaves.

Lord: Thy sun—O sun! sun! sprung up among us
as great grain! now come! come to our need as
peace, to peace as need! Bring grief
to humble us!

And yet these mists slide windward like a sigh

Lord:
here in the midst of our lives
we are weary of death, of dying, crying "Breath!"—
the smile wreathed by spiders and the eye
giving the scene, the season and the leaves
as a winding-sheet
who labor in darkness at the edge of light,
who labor through darkness to the rim of sight,
come among light in darkness,
garnerers who glean in light a sheaf of griefs.

Wherefore we ask Thy mercy. Wherefore we ask Thy peace, asking a brief
deliverance—
as light in these dim forests of our days

as rain on the desert like a grain

as hosts who shall answer most of our sighs

as praise which shall come among
our cries.

Prophet into Historian

The Bulpington of Blup. H. G. Wells. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

NOWADAYS Mr. Wells does not bother to vary greatly the pattern of his fictions. When he feels a novel coming on he chooses either a Utopia or an imaginary biography, and after that choice has been made there remains only the task of recombining the characters and situations which he has used again and again. The result, even when it is more or less entertaining, as "The Bulpington of Blup" undoubtedly is, remains, nevertheless, perfectly familiar. One has met this decent but bewildered young man many times before. One knows how the preliminary stirrings of sex are going to affect him, and just how he is going to feel when he meets the inevitable young woman of emancipated habits. One knows, also, how the war is going to disrupt the seemingly stable world in which he finds himself, and one has listened before to these same conversations about science, religion, and politics. It is all amazingly fluent, amazingly perspicuous and reasonable. It is also remarkably clever and studded with phrases so neat and so conclusive that one would have to single them out for applause if one had not come to take them for granted in this particular author. But somehow or other the enthusiasm of Mr. Wells is more nearly tireless than that of his readers. He can rise again and again to the same situation, but we cannot. The writing may be as good as ever, and it is certainly not perfunctory, but the reading is. The mind will not follow what it has followed so many times before. If it has not taken in all this several novels ago, if it has not already agreed with Mr. Wells at least as far as he goes, it never will.

Theodore Bulpington was the son of a literary dilettante who came near to flourishing during the nineties. Theodore himself grew up in a somewhat preciously "advanced" atmosphere, and was accustomed from childhood to retire from reality into a dream world where he was not his own undistinguished self but a legendary figure known as The Bulpington of Blup. His early adolescence was troubled somewhat by the discourses of a fat Catholic convert suspiciously like Mr. Chesterton, and troubled still more by the son of an eminent biologist. Then he went off to London, attended the meetings of the Fabian society, and met there an ardent young Jewess who introduced him to the amorous mysteries of which his real love remained ignorant. Theodore was delighted but upset. Then came the war—but why go on? It is, perhaps, more interesting to note that Mr. Wells has changed in one subtle way, but in one only. Gradually, quite imperceptibly, he has become less and less the prophet of his chosen generation and more and more its mere historian.

When he first told the story here repeated he told it to encourage the others. These earnest young men and these brave

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young women were models for imitation, groping heralds of the new dawn. When they argued, they were solving problems that had to be solved; when they went to bed together they went, not merely as individuals, but as New Men and New Women destined to show the way to a freer and a brighter life. Mr. Wells was their apologist and advocate. He pointed out the inner significance of what they did, and enlarged upon the promise inherent in their attitude. In no small measure he invented the Wellsian hero and the Wellsian heroine in order that life might imitate them, and he had the satisfaction of seeing young people make every effort to live the biographies he had already written about them. But in these later novels the strain of prophecy has run out. It is no longer what that generation is going to do; it is merely what it did, and, by consequence, the tone is less confidently hopeful. Mr. Wells has not changed his opinions. He has not, like Mr. Shaw, become a pessimistic mystic with a penchant for Strong Men. But he does seem ready to confess that the results of the Research Magnificent were not as magnificent as the research itself, and he shows little inclination to advise contemporary youth as he advised the youth of twenty years ago. Instead, he returns to the epoch of which he was the major prophet, and concerns himself less with what it ought to have done than with what it did do. Theodore Bulpington was a failure. Perhaps that is how Mr. Wells has come to think of the Wellsian hero.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Victorians and "Moderns"

The Great Victorians. Forty Essays Edited by H. J. Massingham and Hugh Massingham. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

"IT is our deprecatory claim," its editors write, "that this volume is a summing up of one generation by another." Without examination of the theory of "summing up" a past age by turning loose upon it a "representative company of moderns," it may be said that in this instance the technique has failed. The reason for the failure is that most of the "representative company of moderns" represent nothing or, if anything, nothing that is modern. To gaze back upon Trollope through the medium of Hugh Walpole can scarcely be helpful, for Mr. Walpole, in spiritual time, is really Trollope's contemporary. Nor has one's modern outlook been served when Professor Muirhead summarizes F. H. Bradley's philosophy with scarcely a mention of the important political implications of that philosophy. There is something essentially Victorian in St. John Ervine's account of General Booth, which ignores the momentous social significance of the Salvation Army and treats it only as the picturesque background of Booth's personal struggle. When the poet Edmund Blunden writes of Matthew Arnold from a poetic vacuum, and all of Arnold's political, religious, and even critical thought fades away, he is being considerably less modern than Arnold himself. Nor can it be said that modernity is investigating the past when A. Wyatt Tilby and R. H. Wilenski, writing about Carlyle and Ruskin, do, indeed, see the political importance of these men, but describe it in terms so remote that it is impossible to think of Carlyle as a fascist or of Ruskin as a communist, which they were.

It is, however, not merely from a kind of deadness to political realities that the book suffers. In purely literary criticism the same deadness prevails. Frank Swinnerton discusses the fact that Thackeray was a gentleman and no martyr, and H. M. Tomlinson grows petulant over the relegation of Stevenson to the ranks of juvenile literature. The writers more immediately in the current of modernity are scarcely more illuminating. Rebecca West on Charlotte Brontë, Charles Morgan on Emily, and V. Sackville-West on George Eliot are so sensitive, so talented, that one feels almost sure that something is being said, but actually they have produced only meaningless advertising copy for their authors in Mr. Walpole's manner.

However, there are a few exceptions to the general poverty. There are three essays on scientists—G. P. Wells's Darwin, G. Elliot Smith's E. B. Tylor, and J. W. N. Sullivan's Clerk Maxwell—which are admirable. H. J. Massingham contributes an attack on Huxley for betraying Darwinism to the predatory philosophies of capitalism which, though pyrotechnic in style, has real, if not original, point. J. Middleton Murry's rehabilitation of William Morris in the light of Marx is an illuminating piece from which Marxism seems to have routed his usual muddle and mysticism. W. J. Turner and Martin Armstrong supply sound essays on Swinburne and Burne-Jones respectively.

But the book as a whole is not the summing up of one generation by another. It is rather the summing up of one group of English writers by a very similar group of English writers.

LIONEL TRILLING

Winston Churchill Again

Amid These Storms: Thoughts and Adventures. By Winston S. Churchill. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

SOME four years ago, when reviewing in *The Nation* the concluding volume of "The World Crisis," I said it was hard to believe that the author of that astonishing work could be kept out of the first place in British affairs. He is today, seemingly, farther away from that place than at any time (except for the interval just after the tragic Gallipoli campaign) during the past twenty years, and the fact is not less remarkable now than it was in 1929. "Winston Churchill," said a member of the last Labor Government to me, "is the most highly endowed man in English public life"; and I think, on the whole, we have to agree with that estimate. He has the energy and mastery of genius. He has far more intellectual power than any member of the present National Government, or perhaps than any two of them combined. During the past year he has made a number of speeches near the highest level of his best time, and as anyone can see, he is chafing at the spectacle of old colleagues and opponents in coalition failing to govern England at a time of supreme crisis. And yet what does all this amount to? Winston Churchill has filled more Cabinet offices than any other man in the history of England, but when Cabinets are made nowadays it is taken for granted that he will be left out. There is, however, one form of government possible in England for which he is altogether fitted. He is awaiting the development of a British variant of Fascismo; and I should not care to assert that he will wait in vain.

The twenty-three chapters making up this miscellaneous volume are extremely diversified in theme and are most unequal in treatment. They have one characteristic in common—the Churchill vitality; and those that deal with the life of action are greatly superior to the rest, which contain the author's reflections and guesses. The adventures, in other words, are far better than the thoughts. There are here, for example, two chapters on the U-boat warfare which combine narrative and criticism with a skill and force that no living English writer could surpass. Mr. Churchill writes with an inside knowledge almost unapproached. He gives a vivid sketch of the conflict between politicians and naval men over the crucial question of convoys, a question in regard to which the politicians were not only right but victorious. Equally good in their different ways are Mr. Churchill's memories of Parliament and his election fights, particularly the story of his connection with Dundee, for which city he sat in the House of Commons for fifteen years.

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This is one of the most singular episodes of British party warfare. A certain fundamentalist prohibitionist evangelist, named Scrimgeour, who labored in the horrible slums of Dundee, marked Mr. Churchill down at the first of his elections and kept at it until he turned him out. Scrimgeour began by polling 300 votes, and eventually topped the poll with 35,000, just after Mr. Churchill had lost his place in the Cabinet and had undergone a serious operation:

> And all this, mind you, at the close of a year when I had been by general consent more successful in Parliament and in administration than at any other time in my life. In the twinkling of an eye I found myself without an office, without a seat, without a party, and without an appendix!

He is usually quite candid. After the terrible failures of the Dardanelles campaign he joined the western front as a major, and he describes with the utmost good humor the shocking manners of certain British officers with whom he was associated and the personal humiliations to which they subjected him. He tells with impertinent gusto the story of the battle of Sidney Street in East London, the most amazing example of Churchillism in action with which London is acquainted. In 1910 he was Home Secretary, and when certain violent anarchists who had shot a squad of unarmed policemen to death were cornered in a small house, he called out the troops and staged a siege which ended with the burning of the house and its inmates, himself looking on. He admits that his right place was in Whitehall, but adds that his visit was well repaid.

Mr. Churchill, one may note, is always right. He has changed over more often than any other English politician, but in each case, as he contends, he was never at any given moment on the wrong side; hence he can write an eloquent defense of political inconsistency. Parliament, he argues, has been wonderfully efficient as a political instrument, but the master movement of these times is economic, and for that Parliament is of no use. The question now arises whether, while time remains, there should not be created "a new instrument specially adapted for the purpose," and whether we should not "delegate to that instrument all the necessary powers and facilities." Ah, quite so: what did I say about Mr. Churchill's hopes and aims? He would persuade us, again, that democracy and the mass process have made an end of the powerful personality, thinker or man of action: "the great emancipated nations" seem to have become independent of all such. But what curious nonsense is this! Ours is the age of Lenin and Stalin, of Mussolini, Gandhi, and the new despots of the Moslem lands. And what, we may ask, would be the excuse for a Winston Churchill in a world of flat mediocrity? True, the multitude in England has shown an odd unwillingness to follow one particular great man. But that is another question.

S. K. Ratcliffe

When Is a House Not a House?

Housing America. By the Editors of *Fortune.* Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

The Disappearing City. By Frank Lloyd Wright. William Farquhar Payson. $2.50.

THE first half of "Housing America" deals with Housing As It Is, and presents an exceedingly valuable analysis of contemporary methods of providing shelter in this country and a sharp and damning picture of the results obtained by these methods. The first chapter, which surveys the famous American standard of living and finds deficient hygiene, nonexistent amenities, and the worst slums of the Western world—all at an exorbitant price—could alone serve to erase the word prosperity from histories of our post-war period.

But the second half of "Housing America," which deals with housing America from now on, is an incomplete and even a misleading exposition of the subject. The first part shows conclusively that our bad dwellings are the inevitable compounded result of inflated land values, speculative cutthroat development methods, wasteful financing, lack of control of land use, discriminatory taxation, vested interests in slum properties, a chaotic building industry, and habitual thinking in terms of one house rather than of a unit community. Then in the second part everything is hopefully solved by Industry's Answer, which is the prefabricated individual house to be set up on individual lots by individual owners at—necessarily—a price which will still make it available only to the upper income group. Fortunately, no one who has read the first part carefully will be very badly taken in, although he may well be sorely disappointed.

Mr. Wright's solution is more attractive, but it is also even more disappointing. For Frank Lloyd Wright, as a romantic revolutionary and an artist with a well-trained imagination, offers a picture which must be judged by Utopian standards—that is, by whether it would be an ideal place to live in or not. And although there never was a moment when a good emotional picture of what we want was more needed, Mr. Wright's Utopia won't do.

Mr. Wright hates cities, loves the country, and believes in the freedom of the individual. So far we will gladly go with him. These qualities of his have already produced some excellent buildings and a magnificent "Autobiography." But Wright's ideal society seems to live in a sort of endless Road Town; its entire social structure and its ideal of individual freedom are based on the intensive use of the automobile. Each house is set in its own acre or more of land. Factories and schools are equally isolated. A few skyscraper office buildings and apartments are set in parks. A minimum of communal facilities—shopping centers, clubs—is clustered around the gas station. Communication is achieved only by a network of super-highways. The rich will live in highly individual and luxuriously self-sufficient and self-expressive villas. The poor will live somewhat less so. Presumably they will both have to drive wells, dig cesspools, and pay taxes for miles of pavement.

But, alas, it is just not possible to spread the town all over the country and preserve the virtues of either. Community and solitude, civilization and nature, mutual aid and individual freedom, are equally defeated; and what does one find but something not unlike our present upper-class suburbs? For the automobile is not a bodyless, magic means of transportation. It does not eliminate time and space. It is still true that it is simpler, pleasanter, cheaper, safer, and more convenient to walk a quarter of a mile to school or shop than to drive fifteen. It is also still true that you cannot cut up the countryside with highways and dot it with private estates and gas stations, and maintain much of its value as countryside. Moreover, and truest of all, almost everything implicit in the idea of culture or civilization—whether it be art, or security, or economy of effort, or liberated individuals, or mutual good-will—has its roots in some sort of organic social grouping. Exchanging slaves for machines does not transform a feudal society into a modern Utopia.

Both of these books (or at least the parts of them which I have perhaps arbitrarily chosen for emphasis) are inclined to be romantic about the machine as an instrument of progress—which has something to do with the fact that as studies in the future of housing they are both weakened at the start by an incomplete definition of a house. A house to the editors of *Fortune* is primarily something which is now very badly and wastefully produced, and therefore offers an obvious opportunity for new industrial enterprise. A house to Frank Lloyd Wright is a place where a man puts his car in the garage and is king of all he surveys.

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But meanwhile the Germans have been evolving a somewhat different definition of a house. A house, to most good German planners, is an integral part of a planned and equipped community unit; it has a garden, rents for what an average man can pay, and is situated not more than twenty minutes away from a good place to swim and a large stretch of forest or mountain permanently preserved from gas stations. This idea seems to me to have the merit of being both a more practical approach to the housing problem than that of *Fortune* and a more attractive ideal than that of Mr. Wright. Moreover, it has been tried and it works. C. K. BAUER

A History of Religions

Religion in Various Cultures. By Horace L. Friess and Herbert W. Schneider. Henry Holt and Company. $5.

THE authors of this book have made every effort to "promote a more direct and varied acquaintance with religion as a factor in the life and organization of particular cultures," and the result has been most interesting and most successful. Their treatment is completely unbiased and thorough, and very compact. Moreover, their book differs from previous works on the same subject, not only because of its superiority in the organization of the material, but also on account of its clear and vivid exposition of the relation between religion, society, philosophy, and art. A great deal is lost in studying religion as a realm sufficient unto itself. To separate religion, philosophy, and art is to prevent a possible comprehension of any one of them in its entirety, and this is one of the reasons that this book, which recognizes their interdependence, is a valuable contribution to the study of religion.

The authors have made no attempt to give an exhaustive or encyclopedic history of any one religion, yet they have avoided the mistake of making their descriptions and analyses too brief or too general. Nor do they deal with all the religions, but with the aim of illustrating a significant variety in the growth of world culture, center their attention on Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, the Greek religion, Judaism, and Christianity. There are also two brief introductory chapters on primitive religions. In their answer to the question: What has religion contributed to culture? they include a study not only of mythologies, theologies, cosmologies, and ethical codes, but also an evaluation of the various religious rituals, festivals, and works of art. For example, much space is devoted to a description of the Shinto religious festivals and the rural Dionysia; the architecture and symbolism of the Shinto, Hindu, and Buddhist temples, the Jewish synagogues, and the Christian cathedrals; and the Greek and Christian religious dramas. Moreover, the life of the members of the various religious communities with their numerous customs and duties is clearly and concretely depicted—not only for lay religious groups, but also for the monastic orders, in both the West and the East.

Special mention should be made of the structure of the history of Hinduism. Most historians have made something of a muddle of the organization of this very complex material, but the authors of this book are an exception. With remarkable brevity and clarity they arrange the subject under the headings Hindu Society, Mythology and Cosmology . . ., Rites, Sects, and Movements of Modern Hinduism. The history of Christianity is only about two hundred pages in length, yet in addition to an account of the early life of the church, Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the rise of Protestantism, it contains a short history of all the important Protestant sects, including the Moravians, the Swedenborgians, and the Mormons, and a section on modern humanitarianism, Unitarianism, church federation, and modern Catholicism. LIVINGSTON WELCH

O'Brien's Tales of Horror

The Diamond Lens. By Fitz-James O'Brien. Introduction by Gilbert Seldes. Illustrated by Ferdinand Horvath. William Edwin Rudge. $4.

FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN belongs to the small company of minor American classics that includes such names as Ambrose Bierce and Edgar Saltus. With them he shares an appropriate legend, and what few facts are known seem to support a glamorous superstructure. Mr. Seldes makes the most of an opportunity to retain the colors and materials of a vivid biography. In the early eighteen fifties O'Brien landed in New York, a handsome, well-read, well-educated Irishman. Before the decade ended he had published a number of remarkable short stories evidently written with great facility. He was said to have had his nose broken by a prize fighter and to have enjoyed a brief love affair with a popular actress. His work and social reputation lived in the shadow of Poe's legend, therefore it was said that he drank heavily and was excessively Bohemian in his habits. Unlike Poe, however, he had the reputation for being genuinely gay, a glorious drinking companion; and no matter how shabbily dressed, he carried himself with an air of elegance. He enlisted in the Seventh Regiment of the National Guard of New York, then went off to the Civil War, and died of his wounds in battle in 1861.

When we reread the stories that he left behind him, his legendary biography becomes even more convincing than the bare recital of fact. The stories show an inability to sustain an original intention, as though O'Brien, writing at top speed, had found himself too slow for the onrush of his imagination and had become impatient and bored before he reached the final paragraph. There is much of the actor's eloquence in O'Brien, the love of tinsel for tinsel's sake, and always the desire to bring his brief performance to a close by an unmotivated sword thrust of melodrama. O'Brien's rhetoric is completely justified in such stories as The Golden Ingot, What Was It? and the group of sketches in which the Chinese conjurer, Piou-Lu, is the protagonist. In these his imagination fits in with the florid style of his day—Walt Whitman's editorials, the speeches of Daniel Webster, and the familiar idiom heard across the footlights of romantic drama, the popular diet of the nineteenth-century New Yorker. He could do much in the opening paragraph of a short story, perhaps more than any who have followed his craft, but once his atmosphere was created, he tired of the game. His characters—they are more like lay figures than human beings—are less substantial than Poe's. Often they are young gentlemen of leisure looking for excitement, which is found by looking down the lens of a microscope or purchasing a haunted house. The bare dramatic incident is presented, and from then onward the story is left to shift for itself. In his horror tales O'Brien remains skeptical throughout, but the very fact that he alone is unconvinced by the testimony of his characters carries conviction to the reader. In the semi-humorous fantasies of Piou-Lu, O'Brien's rhetoric is a delight, and the sketches have the same charm that is revealed in Victorian bric-a-brac.

Special attention should be called to the illustrations in this edition of O'Brien's work, for they are among the superlative examples of their kind in modern book-making. Mr. Horvath recreates the period in which O'Brien lived; the suggestion of mystery and horror is in every line; but more than that he has caught the spirit of the old New York that O'Brien knew so well. Here again are the high-ceilinged interiors, the dim oil lamps, and the red-brick Dutch colonial houses dwindling in perspective down narrow streets and lanes.

HORACE GREGORY

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Shorter Notices

Crime for Profit. A Symposium on Mercenary Crime. Edited by Ernest D. MacDougall. The Stratford Company. $2.

This symposium, which includes essays by sociologists, lawyers, educational leaders, and clergymen, is interesting because of its emphasis on the economic interpretation of crime rather than on the superficial, passionate aspects of the disease. Most of the contributors conclude in effect that as long as American civilization is a case of dog eat dog, just so long will dogs eat dogs, and that the problem seems to be to make it unnecessary for men to behave like wild animals in order to support life in a highly competitive struggle. In many of the essays the banker ranks with the racketeer. By far the most interesting contribution is that of Jerome Davis, who suggests the only list of fundamental changes that is offered. Another contributor, C. Walker Hayes, gives this definition: "Crime is the pathological expression of individualism." However, as still another contributor points out, communism is capable of becoming mercenary crime by government. Jerome Davis offers as his thoughtful remedies: absolute freedom of speech, press, and association for all, even those who would overthrow the established order; human rights forever recognized as paramount to property rights; cooperative enterprise; a planned economic and social order; community ownership of things used in common; the curbing of individual interest within social bounds; and "recognition that we are living in a dynamic society. Consequently no matter what changes in the rules of the game are made, more will be perpetually needed." As in all symposiums some of the contributions are suggestive and many of them platitudinous. Harry Elmer Barnes has an interesting essay on the relation of war debts and reparations to mercenary crime.

José Clemente Orozco. With an Introduction by Alma Reed. New York: Delphic Studios. $6.

This book consists of reproductions of Orozco's complete work—his frescos, including those in progress at Dartmouth, his water colors, oils, lithographs, drawings, and studies; among them are some of his earliest achievements. There is a brief and intelligent preface by Alma Reed. A magnificent draftsman, Orozco loses little in reproduction, and as his work is so scattered the book will give most readers a more vivid idea of his genius than they could otherwise hope to have. Those of us who have doubted him can no longer do so after examining it. He displays an astonishing knowledge of how to draw combined with a certain Michelangelesque moral grandeur, and he has an amazing range of feeling—he is capable of the most aggressive and hilarious satire as well as of epic statement. One of his few defects is his use of transcendental symbolism. Though his witty intelligence makes his philosophic symbols interesting, they lack the force of his other figures. It is perhaps because his American frescos have been made from this less earthly subject matter that he has failed to gain whole-hearted American applause.

A New York Tempest. By Manuel Komroff. Coward-McCann. $2.50.

Mr. Komroff has taken the accounts of a famous murder that stirred New York City in the 1830's and made them into a novel. With little attention to the nuances and complexities that enter into human relationships, he has spread out the details of the affair with a broad and almost too complete flourish. A gay young blade strangles his mistress, escapes punishment, and is finally forced to suicide through remorse. All this could have been told more effectively in half the space, but in spite of that it makes an interesting and fast-moving story.

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MAURITZ A. HALLGREN will be the speaker on Wednesday, Jan. 25 at 8:15 P.M.

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The Group Theatre, Sunday, 8:30 p. m.
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Michael Strange, Tuesday, 5:15 p. m.
Hendrik Van Loon, Friday, 8:15 p. m.

Architecture

A Radio City Architect's Economics

DO you frequently read the New York *Times?* Then you may have noticed one of its stock articles. In essence it has appeared in a regular rhythm during the past ten years, though the announcement it carries is always broached as a discovery totally new. It is signed always by an architect. The promise it contains is that architects are going to be good. The promise is made to business men, with apologies for the fact that in the past there was a time when architects acted high and mighty.

The architect who signs the piece being always, for the effect, one associated with a current large undertaking, there is today only one corner from which the announcement can come. No steel work worth mentioning has recently been erected except in Radio City. Hence it was not surprising to find the old message once more, as a bright gift released for Christmas Day, over the signature, not of the usual Mr. Wiley Corbett, but of Mr. L. A. Reinhard. Mr. Reinhard qualifies as an architect of Radio City.

He apparently regards buildings as, first of all, a huge outdoor bookkeeping entry. He says it very clearly. "The fundamentals of architecture now rank as follows: (1) cost, (2) time, governed by finance and investment, and (3) appearance." What is important here is evidently the "rank."

The statement has a good deal to commend it, and used to be believed with all its corollaries. The corollary of "time, governed by finance and investment," was skyscrapers and congestion. Unfortunately, today the order is reversed, and we are witnessing finance and investment called to account by time. Mr. Reinhard may not have noticed it. The sound of rivets is very loud, loud enough to drown out the quieter but equally emphatic rhythm of the auctioneer's gavel and even the crack of the policeman's nightstick on the heads of the only part of mankind desperately in need of these empty buildings—the dislodged unemployed.

There is a special interest today in theories of cost and finance issuing from Radio City. Cooperation, such as its architects propose, between the various workers who put up our buildings, is entirely to the good. But what if "finance," which this cooperation serves and by which it consents to be governed, were running wild? Specifically: here is the 6,200-capacity auditorium of Radio City Music Hall, presided over by the voluble Roxy, and here another mere little *bijou* of a new movie theater, also to be presided over by Roxy, calling for 3,700 visitors per show; and on the same stretch of the L here is the old Hippodrome, just sold for $100,000 to satisfy a debt of $2,600,000; and here a block away is the old Roxy, about which the great man keeps silent nowadays; and up at Columbus Circle was another large theater, the Century, suitable only to "Miracles," and it has totally disappeared, since miracles do not occur daily. And even though converted into a movie palace, the Music Hall must draw 12,400 people daily, if the program of four shows is to play even to half a house; add 7,400 for the other new theater, multiply by 300 days a year (throwing in the Sundays), and you have a total of 11,940,000. Need we suggest, a difficult problem in the New York movie world?

Beginning with the Tower of Babel, large monuments have frequently been landmarks of ambitious folly. The Pyramids arose as tombs not only for kings but for their slaves, and were abhorred in America's young days because of that fact. Who is certain that the same brutality did not underlie the marvel

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of Taj Mahal, which for us is the seal of a sweet romantic love? Yet formerly patron and architect were at least agreed that there was importance in "art," and so despite the miscalculations that frequently liquidated the builder, we still have something left. Delight and sound social morals are not quite coterminous, for which we can be thankful, since otherwise we should almost never experience pleasure in the presence of large buildings. But our New York architects, who might afford with a clear conscience to indulge themselves and us with purely imaginative pleasure, since the venture is likely to go bankrupt anyway (the suggestion comes from Roderick Seidenberg), have decided instead to turn into mere bookkeepers themselves. And so, permitting "appearance" to take last place, there is nothing that they do not stand to lose.

Though buildings no tourist would miss have risen despite ill-considered purposes, the artist is safer when the scheme itself is sound—if he wishes his building is to be living architecture before it is dead scenery. In Radio City, for example, there is the Music Hall auditorium which, for all the architects' mousiness about "appearance," is sensually a delight. But even here the pleasure is not proof against disquieting afterthoughts —doubts mounting daily about the *scale,* wherever the building is discussed. Has not the mountain already brought forth mice? The curious conception of the scheme as a whole, which seems to have been based more on boom and congestion than on anything pertaining to the art of the theater, has entered every part of it, bringing even into this hall some embarrassing flaws that arise from having to reconcile huge with intimate. And this auditorium, let us remember, is Radio City at its best—not the part of it about which we need not speak.

Centuries ago Sir Henry Wotton offered a triad of requisites for architecture that absorbs and transcends Mr. Reinhard's flat "(1) cost, (2) time . . . (3) appearance." "Well-building hath three conditions: commodity, firmness, and delight." As a technologist, that is, one who reasons in the arts, the architect should find his main interest in the connection or relation or interdependence among these three.

DOUGLAS HASKELL

Drama

Some Actors Who Act

FEW American actors have done so much for so many bad plays as Osgood Perkins. It is true that his efforts have usually been unavailing, for the simple reason that fate has commonly put him to work in dramas which even he could not redeem, and it is with difficulty that one can remember anything about them except, perhaps, a scene or two in which the playwright had given him so little to do that he could make up the action as he went along. It is therefore a delight to see him at the Masque Theater laboring under disadvantages no greater than those imposed by a rather amusing farce-comedy entitled "Goodbye Again." The funniest moment of the evening is, to be sure, that upon which the curtain rises—a moment during which nothing whatever is said, while Mr. Perkins slowly regains consciousness after what was evidently a long and convivial evening. But the farce is solidly built, it is amazingly well played throughout, and it deserves the success to which it appears destined.

Mr. Perkins would be a good actor no matter whom or what we were used to seeing. Yet the fact that one finds oneself surprised to realize that he is adding something to the script is enough to remind one how little real acting is done on our stage. Surely it is not too much to ask of an actor that he do more

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GOODBYE AGAIN. Masque Theater. Reviewed in this issue.

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN. Henry Miller Theater. Light comedy from the French completely rewritten by Sidney Howard and charmingly played by Pauline Lord and others. All things considered, it is much the most enjoyable comedy of the season.

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H. L. Mencken's

EDITORIAL

in the February issue of

The American MERCURY

WHEN American taxpayers gather to rub their wounds and howling one hears is always against the forays and extortions of the war veterans, the vast cost of the Federal bureaucracy, the burden of the tariff, or the outrage of the income tax. Why does everyone forget the greatest hold-up of them all? Not once in ten years, so far as I can recall, has it wrung a tear from either the *Nation* or the *New Republic*. No candidate for public office, East, West, North or South, has so much as mentioned it. Yet it costs the people of the good old U. S. A. twice as much as the income tax, three times as much as either the war veterans, real and bogus, or the service of the national debt, and ten times as much as the Smoot-Grundy tariff. Do I allude, perhaps, to the national booze bill? Far from it! What I allude to is the cost. . . .

Mr. Mencken continues with a slashing analysis of the most astonishing "racket" in American government, the cost of which is a burden upon the average taxpayer which is already beginning to crush him. . . . *A fearless, outspoken editorial on a subject which few have dared to discuss,* typical of Mr. Mencken's comments on "What Is Going On In the World" every month in *The American* MERCURY.

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than merely read, with more or less intelligence, the lines of his part. Surely it is part of his job to invent the gestures appropriate to a particular type of character, to fill the pauses with eloquent expressions, and even to discover bits of business which will heighten the effectiveness of the scene. And yet when one comes across a player who really does just that, one realizes how seldom it is done, how commonly our players are content merely to walk through a part with such natural grace as God has given them. Minor roles often give the effect of being reasonably well played because the card index of the casting director is sufficiently elaborate to enable him to locate the type which is called for. It is rare, however, that the harassed critic can say more of the leading players than that they are, in the familiar phrase, "adequate." And that means merely that they have not come between him and the playwright's intention. Charming ladies and graceful gentlemen add the interest of their own personalities for a year or two until one is weary of them. After that one comes to prefer purely negative persons whom one does not remember from play to play. But even moderately good actors are rare. Last season something over four thousand persons appeared on the New York stage. Hardly a dozen of them took the trouble (if they had the ability) to create a character.

Strangely enough, Mr. Perkins does not struggle alone in "Goodbye Again." The whole cast, in which Sally Bates is co-featured with him, really acts, and one Leslie Adams in particular makes the Detroit husband into a real person by endowing him with a kind of slow amiability which gives the key to his words and deeds. Since Mr. Adams is new to Broadway, I have no way of knowing whether or not he happened merely to fit, but if he really created the part, then he too is an actor. As for the play, there is nothing really original about the story of a silly woman who insisted upon believing that she and a college beau had been waiting for each other for seven years—except, perhaps, the fact that the young man is a popular novelist on a lecture tour. Nevertheless, it is competently written, and thanks to the playing, it becomes a very satisfactory evening's amusement.

"A Good Woman, Poor Thing" (Avon Theater) fails for the lack of just the things which save "Goodbye Again." The situation—that provided by a sophisticated couple, who cannot get along because each is too ready to allow the other his "freedom"—is hardly more conventional than the situation in the other play. It is, however, played for the most part in a slovenly, undistinguished way probably caught, in part at least, from the slovenly writing and slovenly construction. There are, to be sure, six or seven lines probably wittier than any in "Goodbye Again." Yet most of the time the author is obviously fighting for time, and he does not seem to know exactly either what style he is writing in or what kind of people he is writing about. Sometimes the piece seems a rather realistic and sentimentally moral comedy. At other times it appears to be struggling to achieve the complete artificiality of Congreve or Wilde. But the indecision of the author plus the indecision of the players results only in a blurred impression. No one cares very much what is going to happen and no one will remember very long what did happen.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"Late One Evening" at the Plymouth is well acted, well produced, and manages, through a movie technique and a series of tense episodes, to hold one's interest. As a play it is ridiculous, a miscellany of familiar situations loosely connected ending in bathos, with a denouement in which the announcement that the heroine is to have a child recaptures her errant author-husband—and changes everything. Ursula Jeans's acting and the scene in a low cafe give the audience something worthy of remembrance.

E. G.

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